by Audrey Snyder

The Rhythm Reader

LEVEL I

A Practical Rhythm Reading Course

This course is designed to be used with the handy play-along trax, orchestrated by Audrey Snyder, and available in cassette and CD format. See the back cover for a complete listing of publications available.

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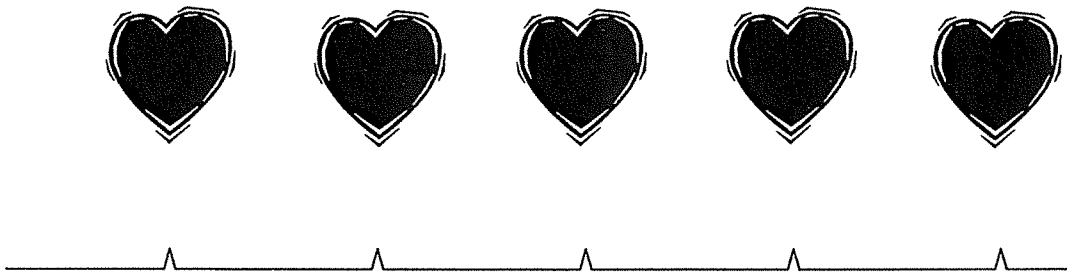
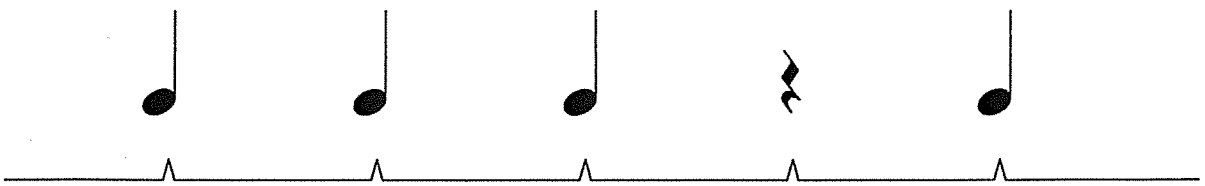
THE BEAT

As you know, your heart beats with an even pulse. It beats fast when you are running and slowly when you are resting, but it always beats evenly.

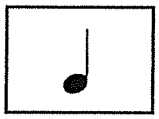


In music, the **beat** is the *steady pulse* which underlies all music played, sung or heard. When the music is written down, composers assign music notes and rests to represent the beat.



QUARTER NOTE AND QUARTER REST

Composers often assign the **quarter note** and **quarter rest** to represent the beat.

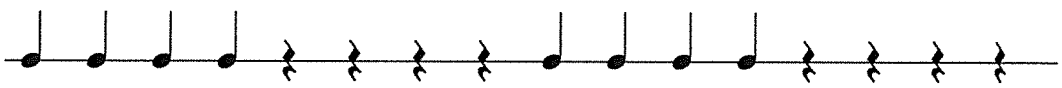

Quarter Note

Quarter Rest

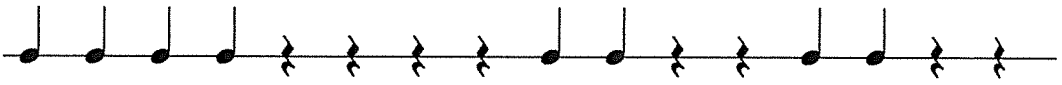
In this case, each quarter **note** represents one beat of *sound* to be played or sung. Each quarter **rest** represents one beat of *silence*.

Count, tap, pat or clap these notes and rests. Keep the beat steady!

EXERCISE 1



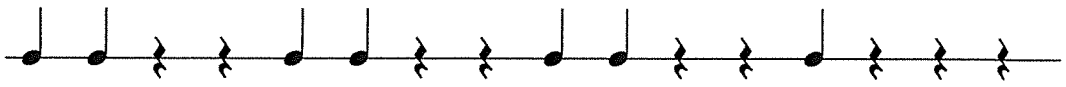
EXERCISE 2



TEMPO

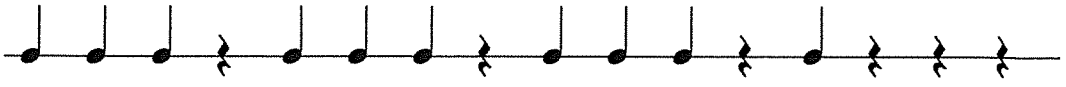
Tempo is the *speed* with which the beat moves. Do these exercises first at a slow tempo and then at a fast tempo. Don't forget to keep the beat steady!

EXERCISE 3



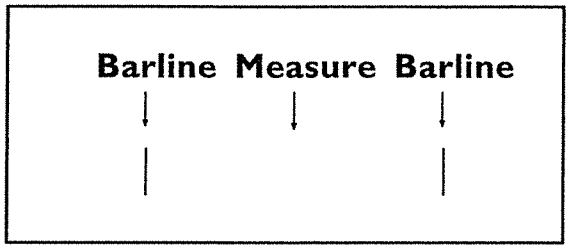
EXERCISE 4

TRACK 1



MEASURE

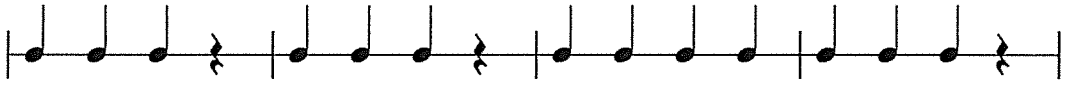
Composers use **barlines** to group music notes and rests together. The space between two barlines is called a **measure.**



Depending upon the way in which the composer wishes the music to sound, he or she will decide the number of beats to be put in each measure. Any number of beats may be grouped in a measure.

There are four beats per measure in the exercises below. Count, tap, pat or clap these notes and rests. Remember, notes represent sound. Rests represent silence.

EXERCISE 5



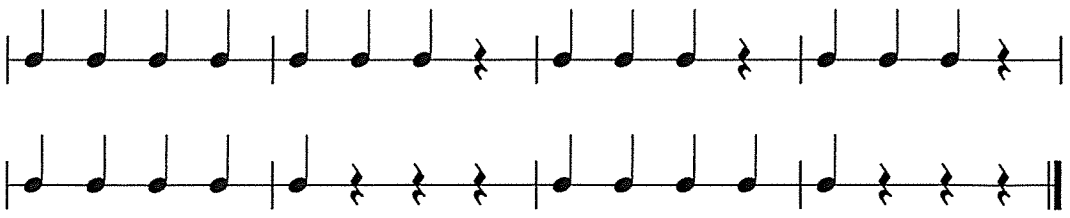
The composer will put a **"fine" double barline** (‖) to indicate the *end* of a piece of music.

Double Barline

(go on to next line)

EXERCISE 6

TRACK 2



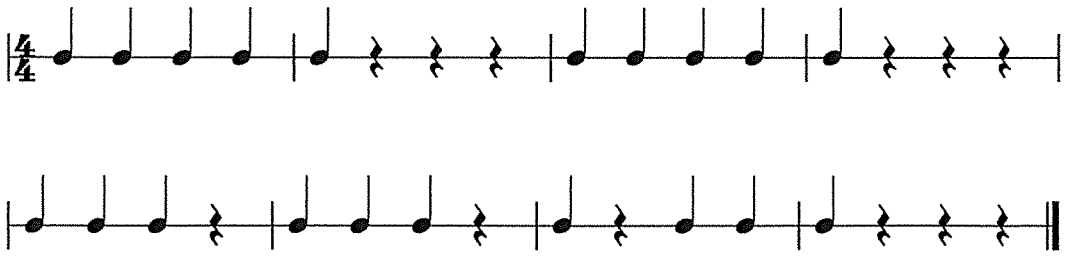
METER SIGNATURE
THE FEEL OF FOUR

A **meter signature** (sometimes called a **time signature**) is located at the beginning of each piece of music. There are two numbers, one above the other. The meter signature does *not* indicate a fraction such as in mathematics. Instead, each number has its own separate meaning:

The *top* number tells us *how many beats will be in each measure.*

The *bottom* number tells us *which kind of note gets one beat.* In this case, since 4 means quarter note, each quarter note (♩) and each quarter rest (𝄽) will represent *one* beat.

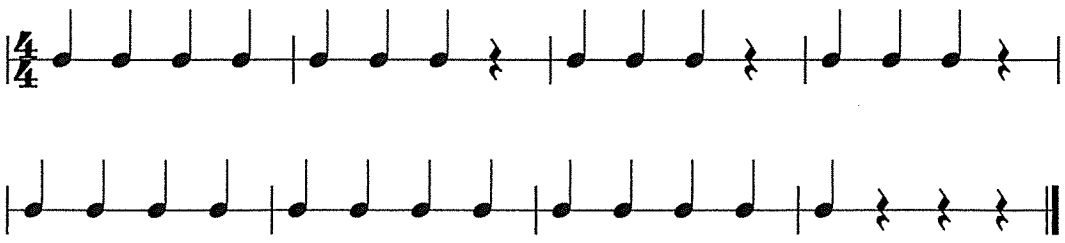
EXERCISE 7



WOOLY MYSTERY RHYTHM

EXERCISE 8

TRACK 3

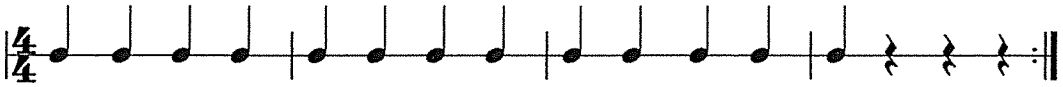


REPEAT

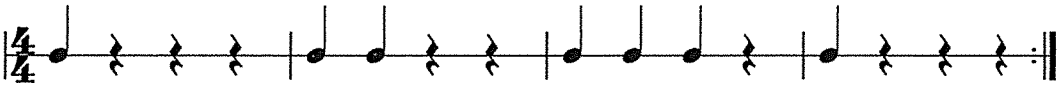
The composer uses the repeat sign symbol to tell us that a section of music should be *repeated.*

Repeat

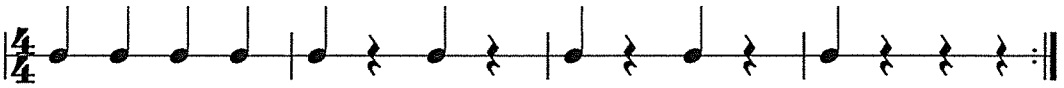
EXERCISE 9



EXERCISE 10

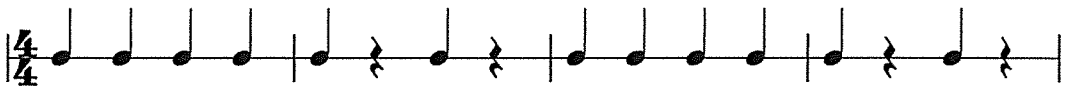


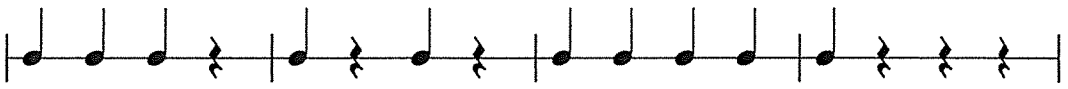
EXERCISE 11

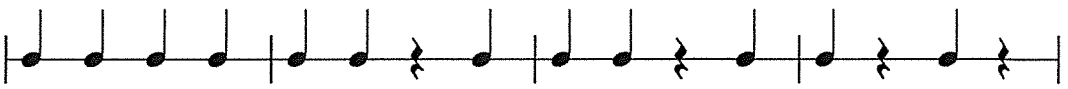


EXERCISE 12

TRACK 4

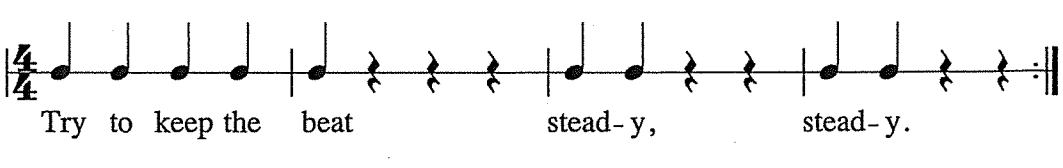




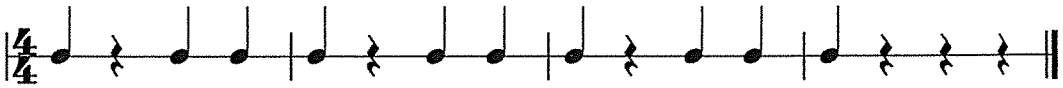


REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

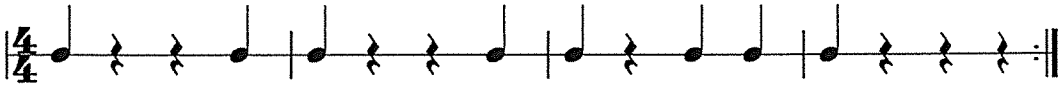
EXERCISE 13
TRACK 5



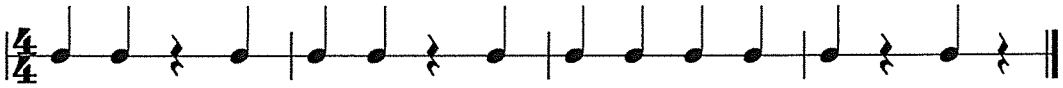
EXERCISE 14
TRACK 6



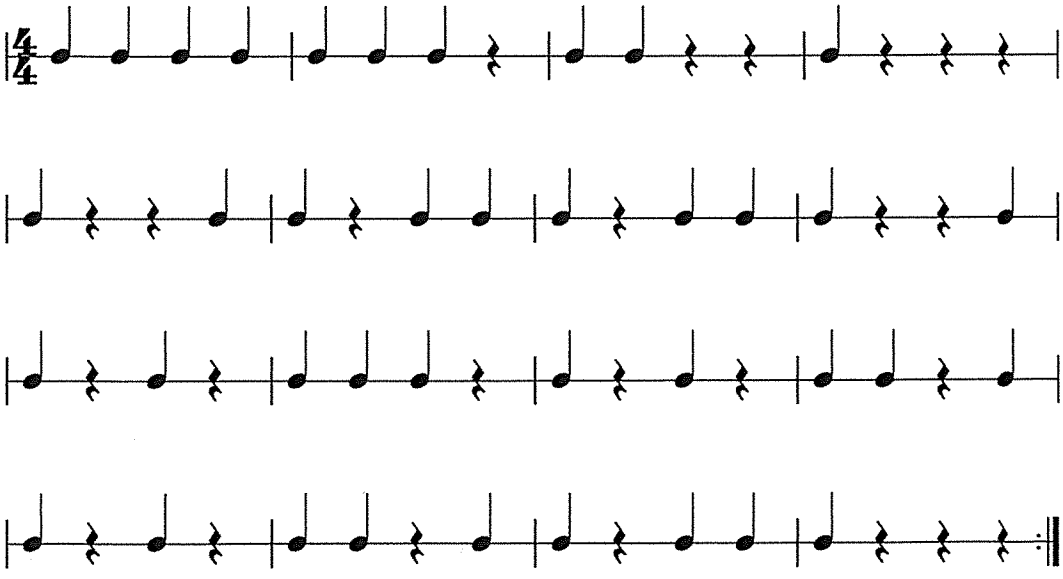
EXERCISE 15
TRACK 7



EXERCISE 16
TRACK 8



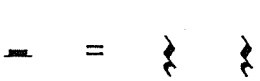
EXERCISE 17
TRACK 9

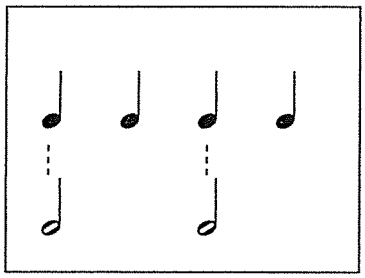


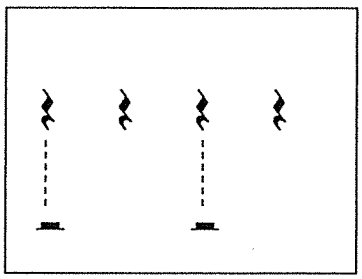
HALF NOTE AND HALF REST

Each **half note** indicates *two beats of sound* in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

Each **half rest** indicates *two beats of silence* in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

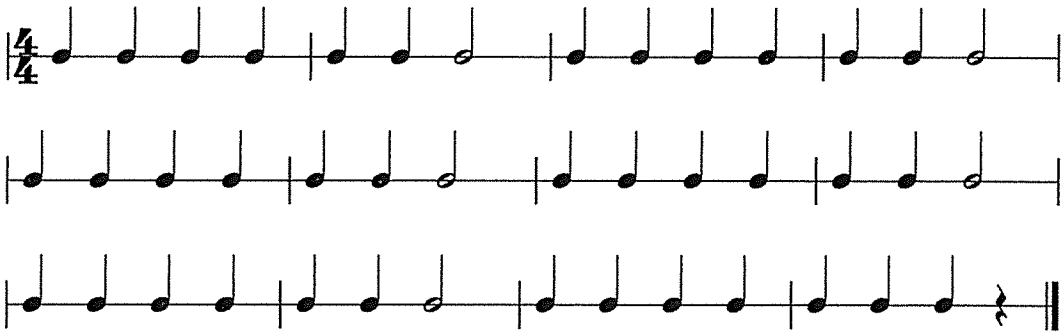




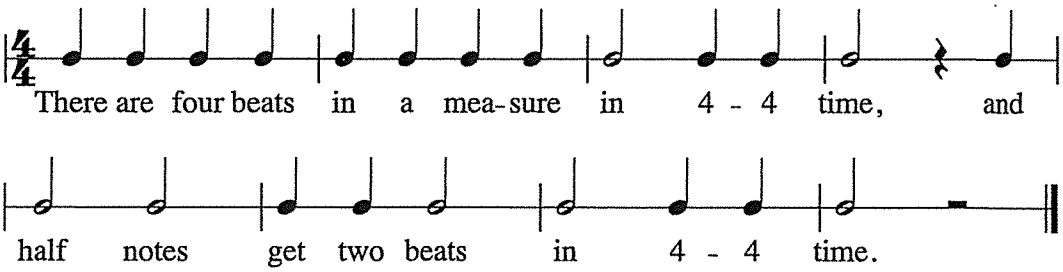


NOCTURNAL MYSTERY RHYTHM

EXERCISE 18

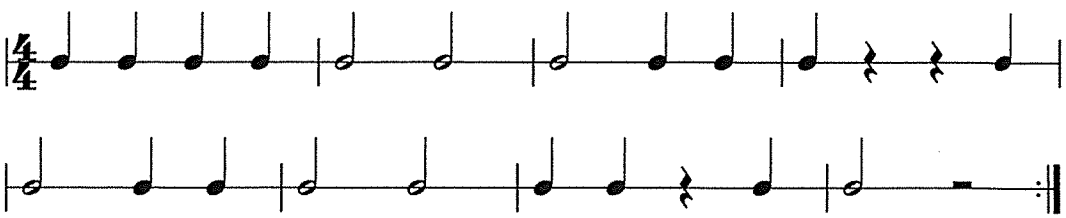


EXERCISE 19

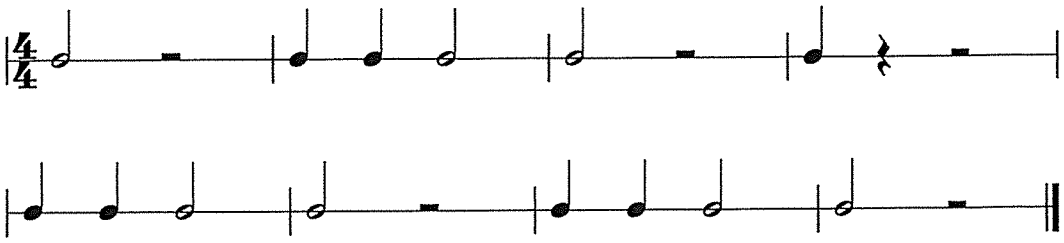


EXERCISE 20

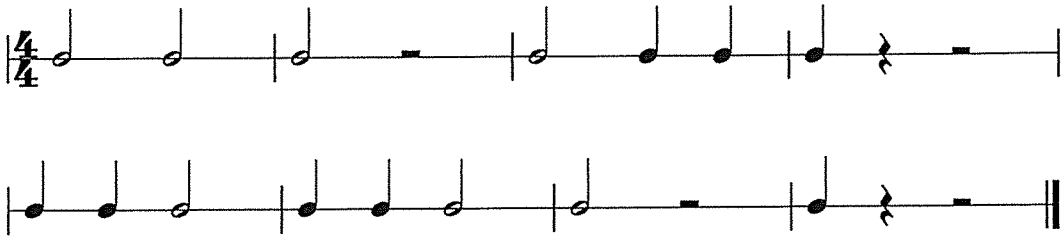
TRACK 10



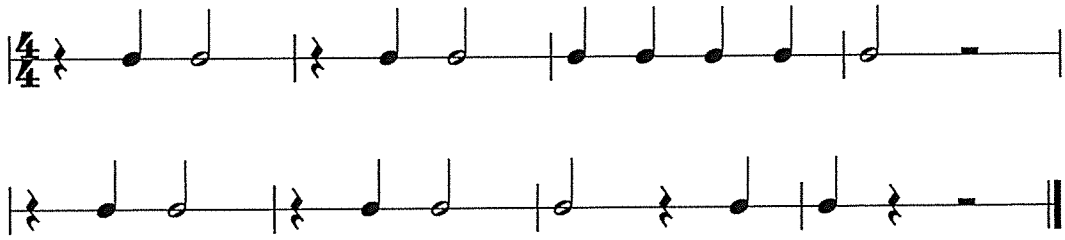
EXERCISE 21



EXERCISE 22

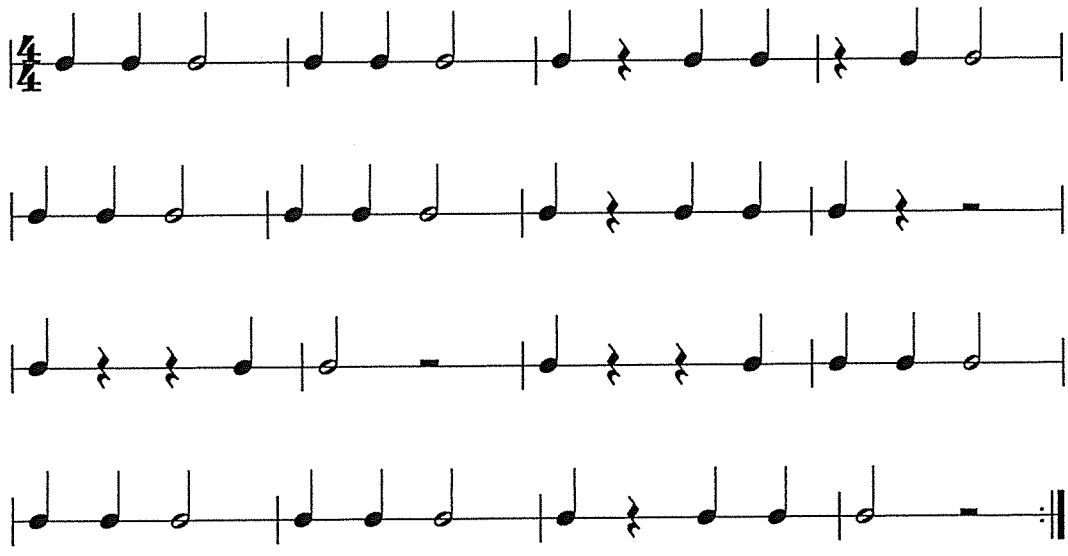


EXERCISE 23



EXERCISE 24

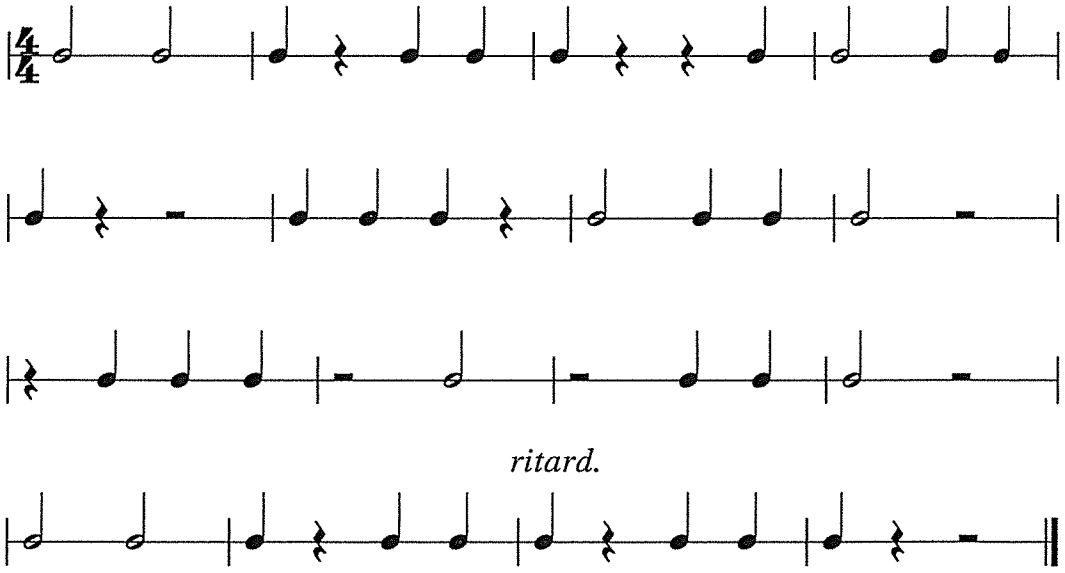
TRACK 11



RITARDANDO

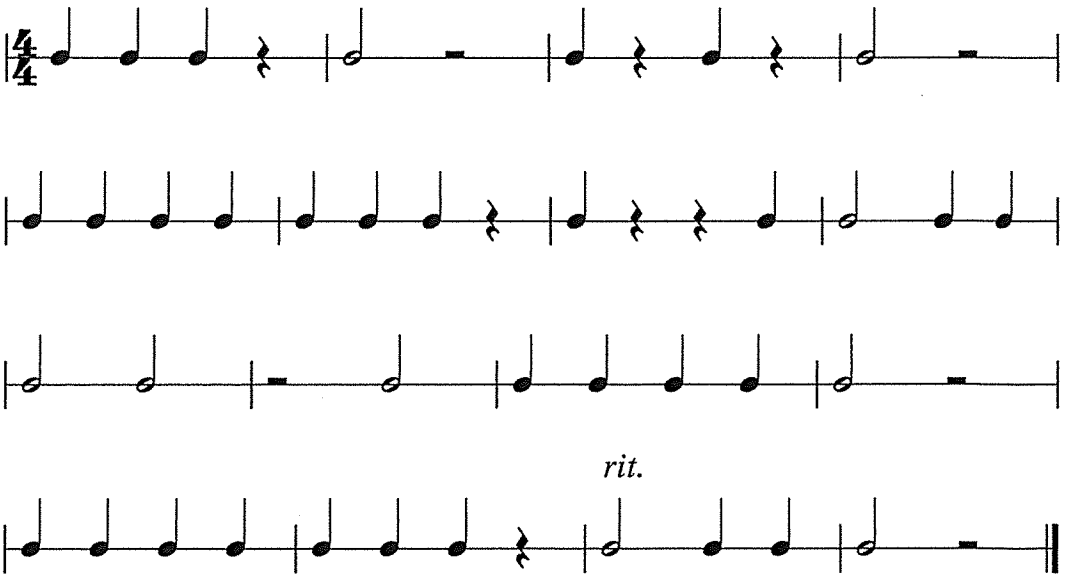
A composer uses the word **ritardando** to indicate that the tempo of the music should become *gradually slower.* In written music it is often abbreviated, **ritard.** or **rit.**

EXERCISE 25

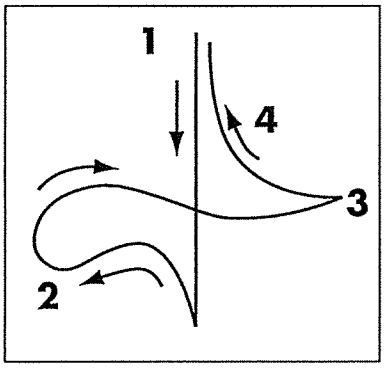


EXERCISE 26

TRACK 12

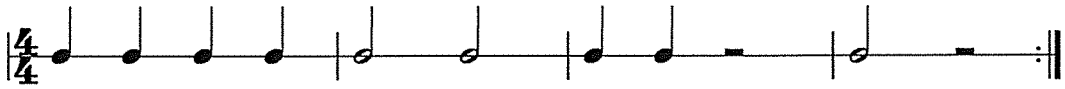


CONDUCTING $\frac{4}{4}$ TIME



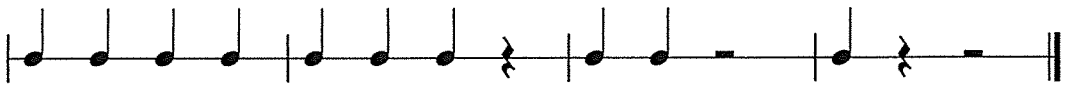
Practice conducting this beat pattern as you count or tap these exercises.

EXERCISE 27



EXERCISE 28

Down, down left, down left right, down left right up,



down left right up, down left right, down left, down.

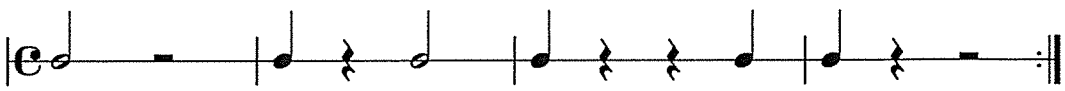
METER SIGNATURE
COMMON TIME

Common time means the same as $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

Common Time

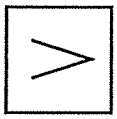
EXERCISE 29

TRACK 13



ACCENT

A composer places an **accent** above or below a note to indicate that the note should be *emphasized* or given *extra stress.*

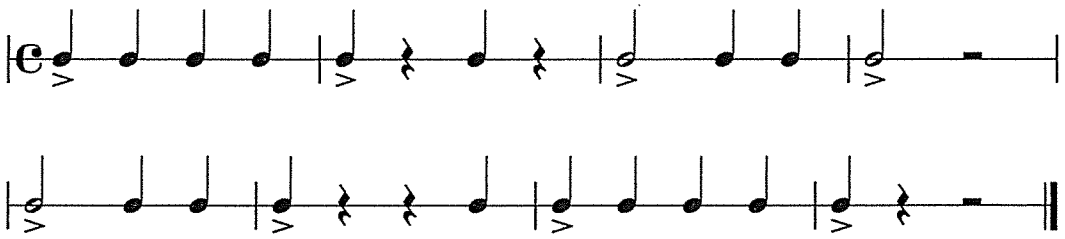


Accent

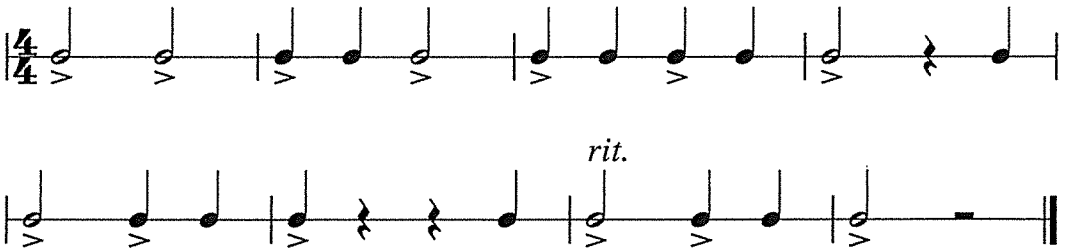
Accented Quarter Notes

The feel of the music will change, depending upon where accents are placed.

EXERCISE 30

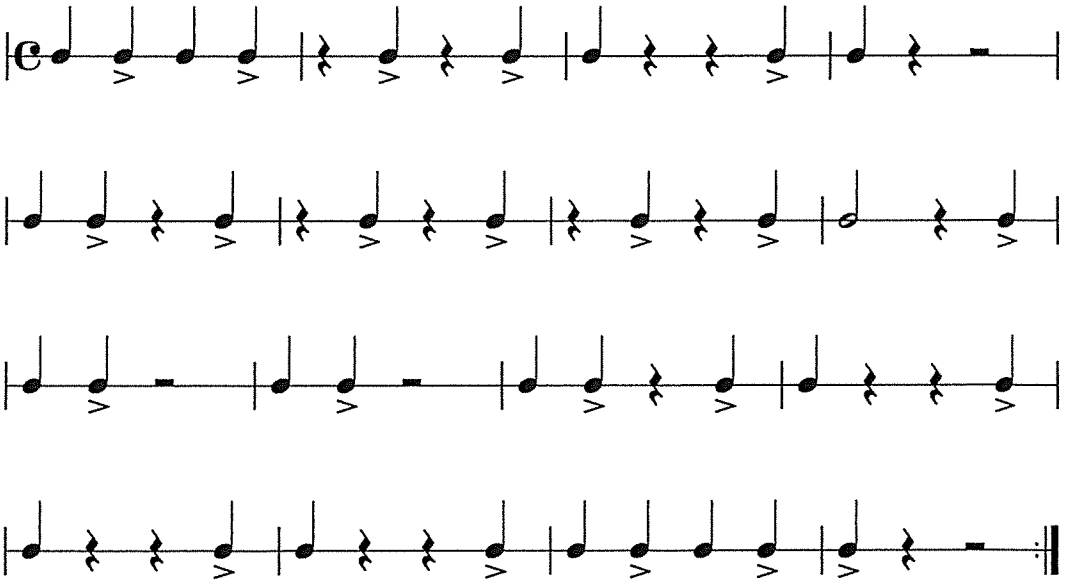


EXERCISE 31



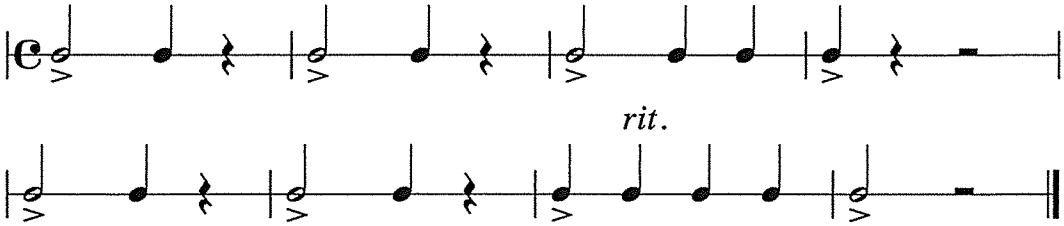
EXERCISE 32

TRACK 14



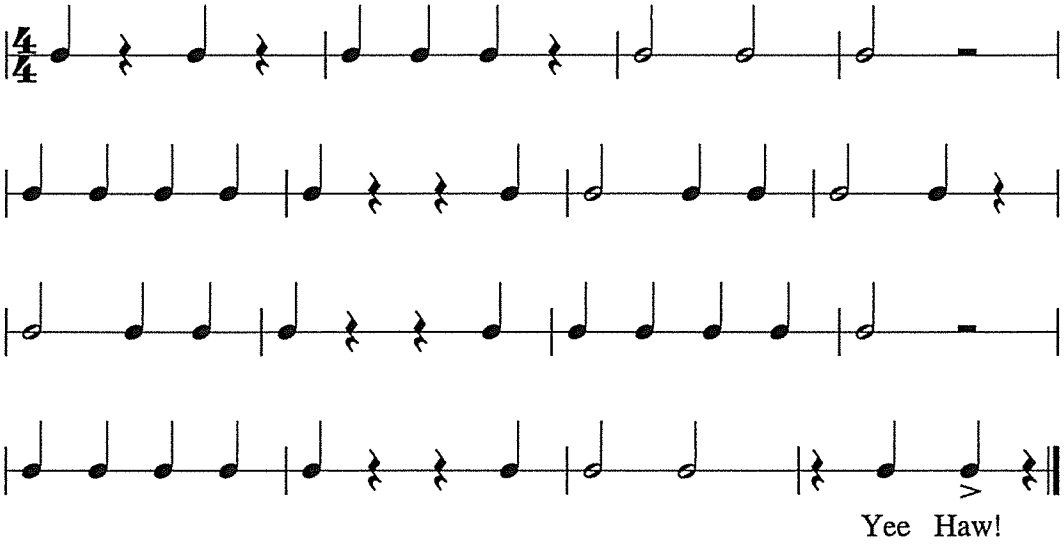
REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

EXERCISE 33
TRACK 15

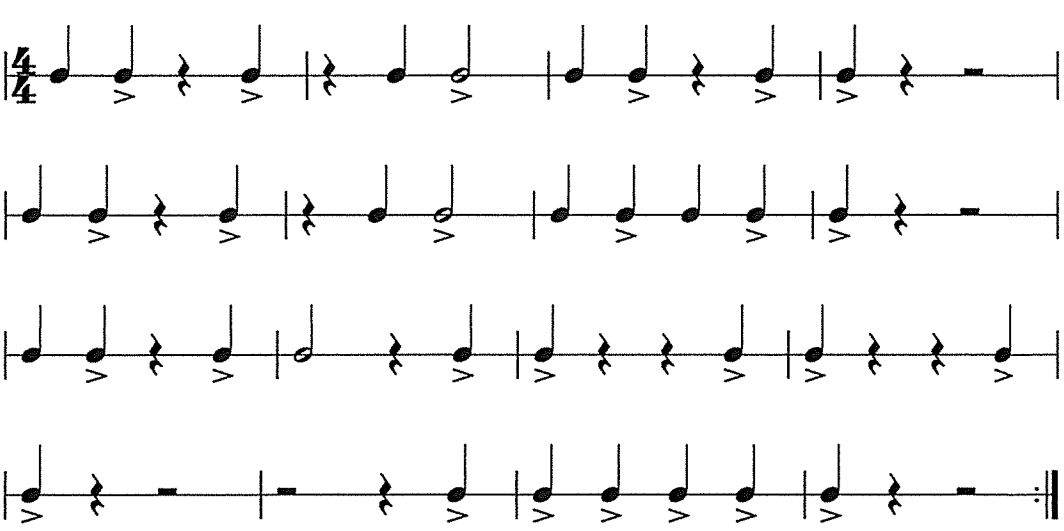


COUNTRY LIVIN'

EXERCISE 34
TRACK 16



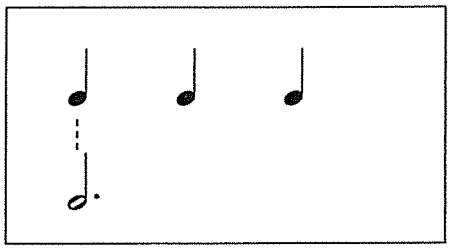
EXERCISE 35
TRACK 17

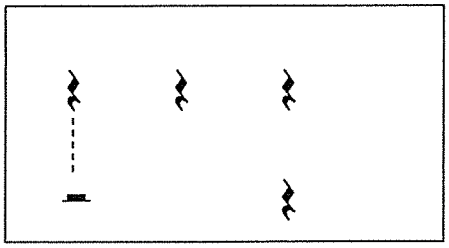


DOTTED HALF NOTE

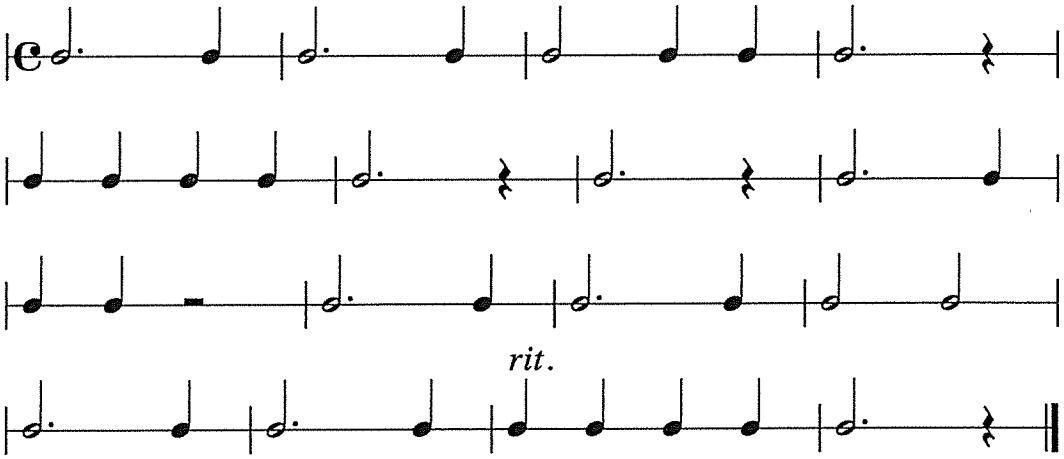
Each **dotted half note** indicates *three beats of sound* in $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

Three beats of rests are indicated as



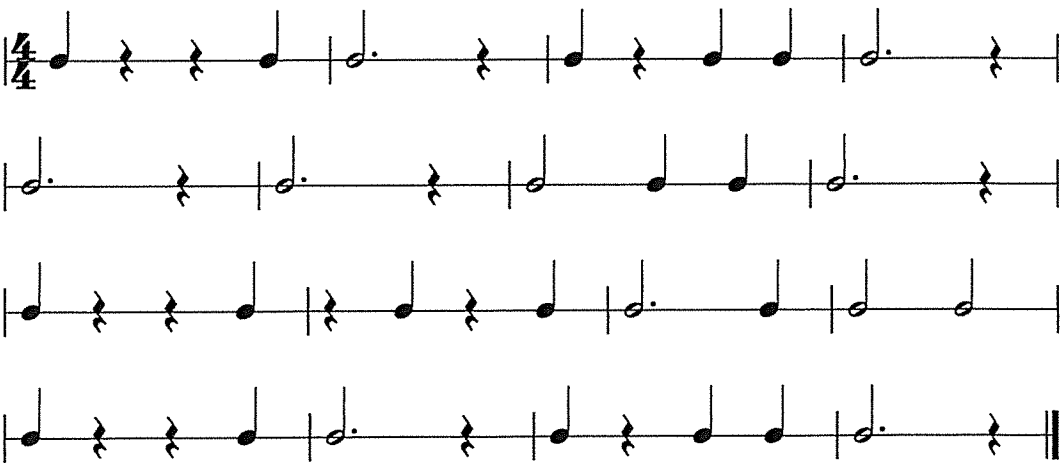


EXERCISE 36



EXERCISE 37

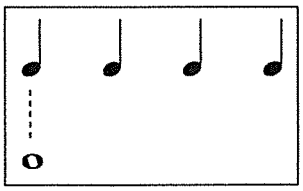
TRACK 18

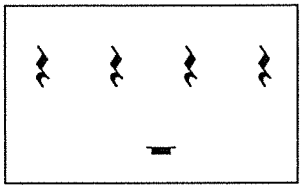


WHOLE NOTE AND WHOLE REST

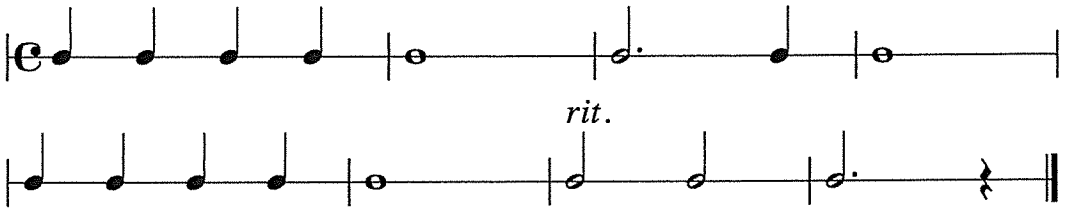
𝅝 Each **whole note** indicates *four beats of sound* in 𝄴 time.

𝄻 Each **whole rest** indicates *one silent measure.*

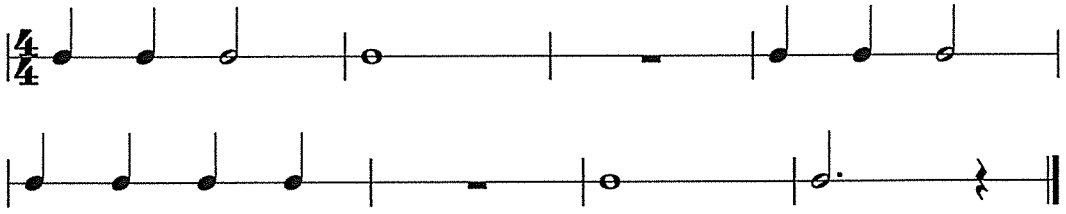




EXERCISE 38



EXERCISE 39



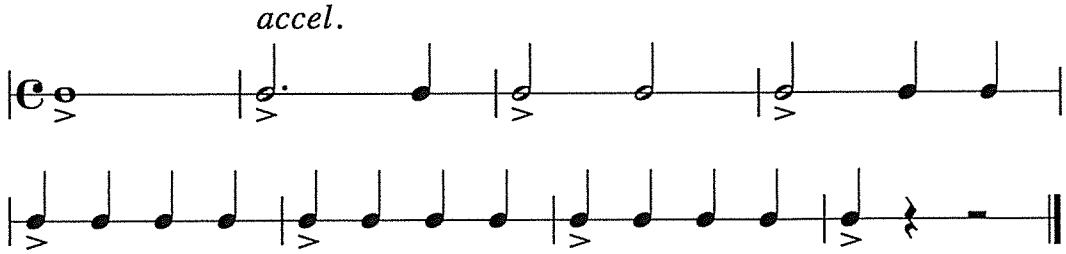
ACCELERANDO

A composer uses the word **accelerando** (sometimes abbreviated *accel.*) to tell us that the music should become *gradually faster.*

TRAIN TRAX

EXERCISE 40

TRACK 19

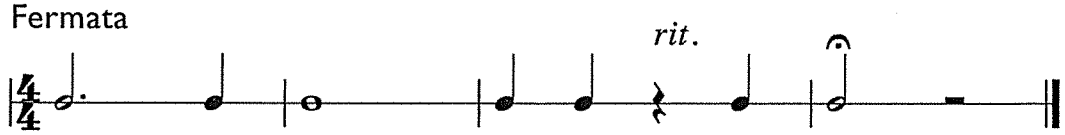


FERMATA

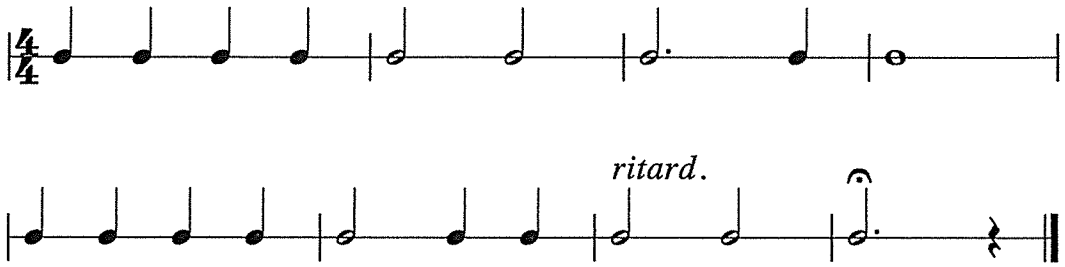
A composer will place a **fermata** above a note to indicate that it should be *held longer* than its usual length.

Fermata

EXERCISE 41



EXERCISE 42

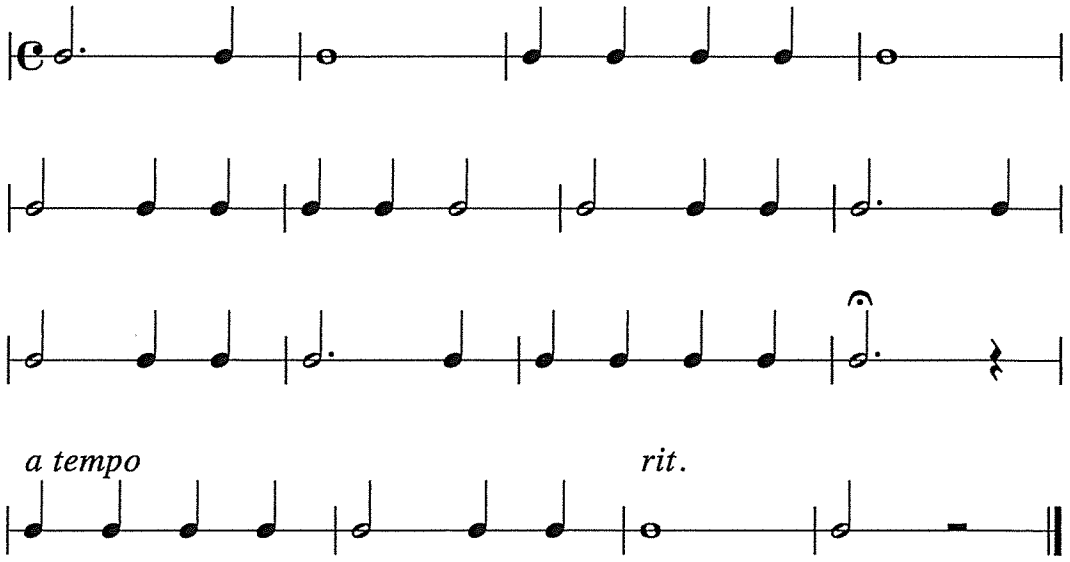


A TEMPO

A tempo means to return to the *original tempo*. A composer will often use it following a ritardando or a fermata.

EXERCISE 43

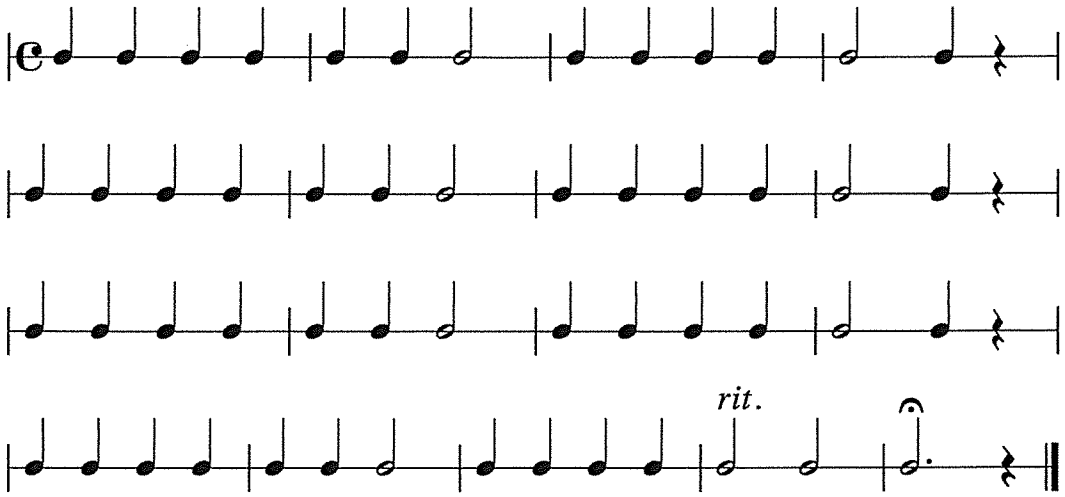
TRACK 20



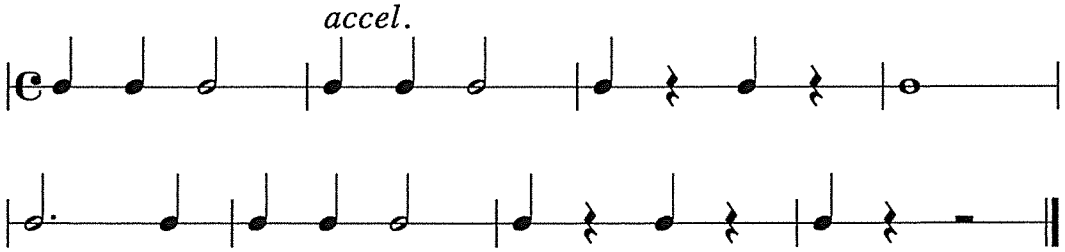
REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

HOLIDAY MONARCH MYSTERY RHYTHM

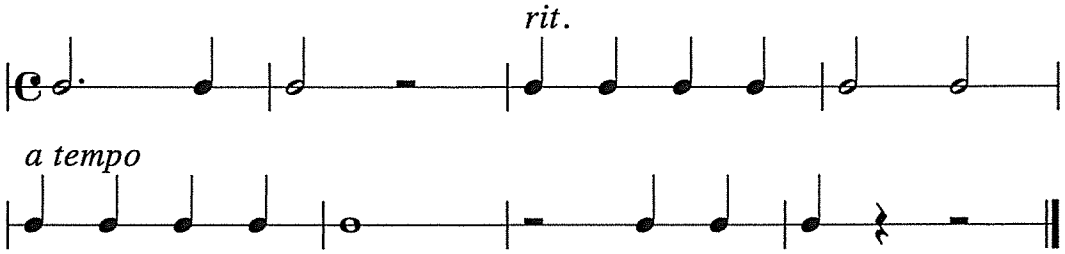
EXERCISE 44
TRACK 21



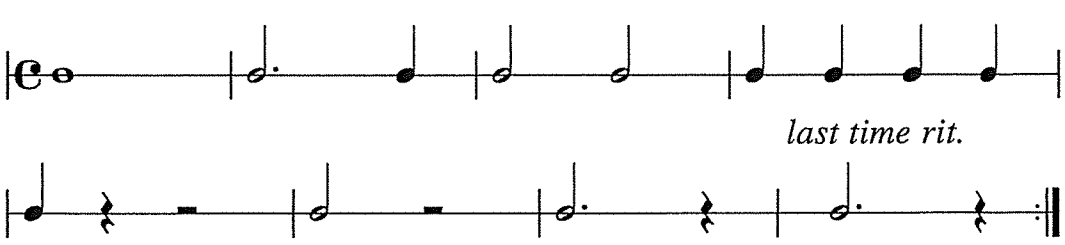
EXERCISE 45
TRACK 22



EXERCISE 46
TRACK 23

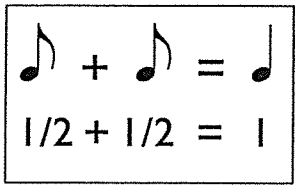


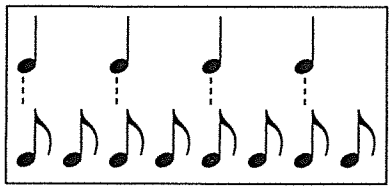
EXERCISE 47
TRACK 24



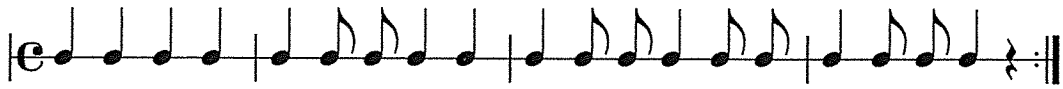
EIGHTH NOTES

Two **eighth notes** together (♪♪) equal one beat in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. Each individual eighth note represents one half (1/2) beat.

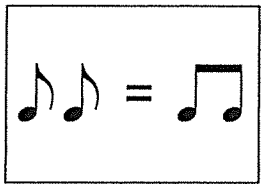


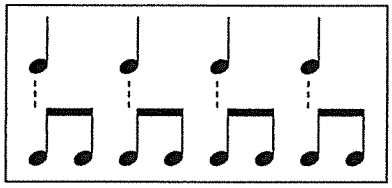


EXERCISE 48



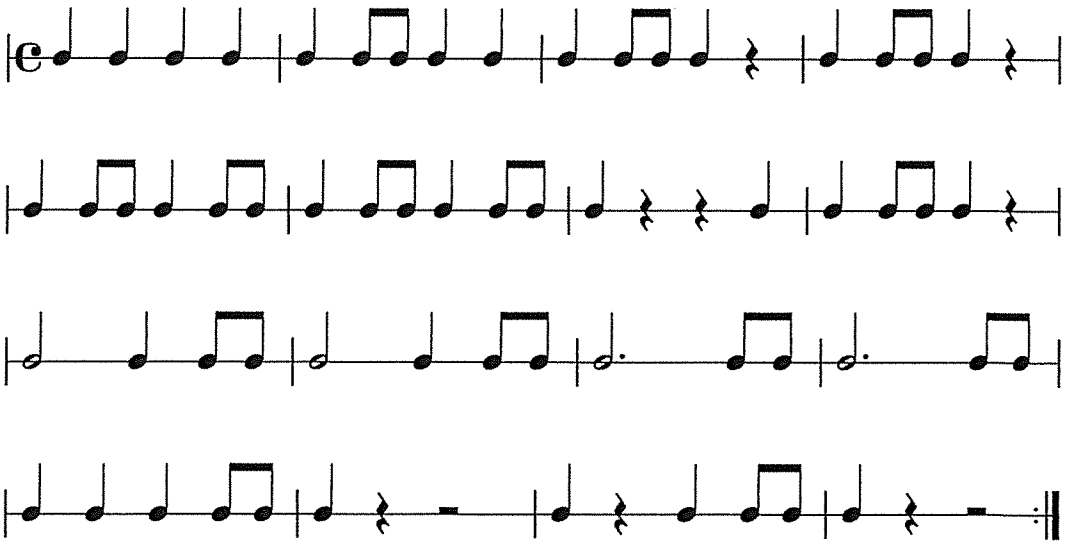
Another way to indicate two eighth notes is with a **beam** (♫) instead of two flags (♪ ♪).





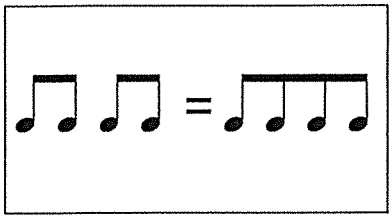
EXERCISE 49

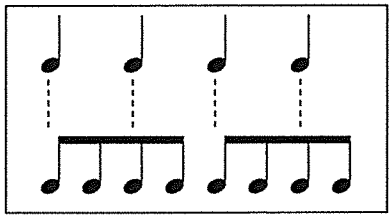
TRACK 25



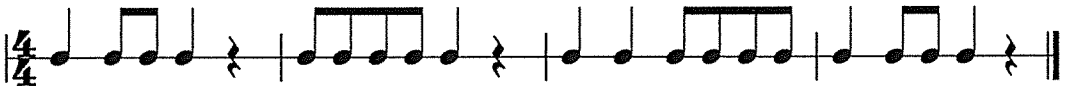
GROUPING MORE EIGHTH NOTES

To indicate that there are more than two eighth notes in a row, a composer will often beam them all together.

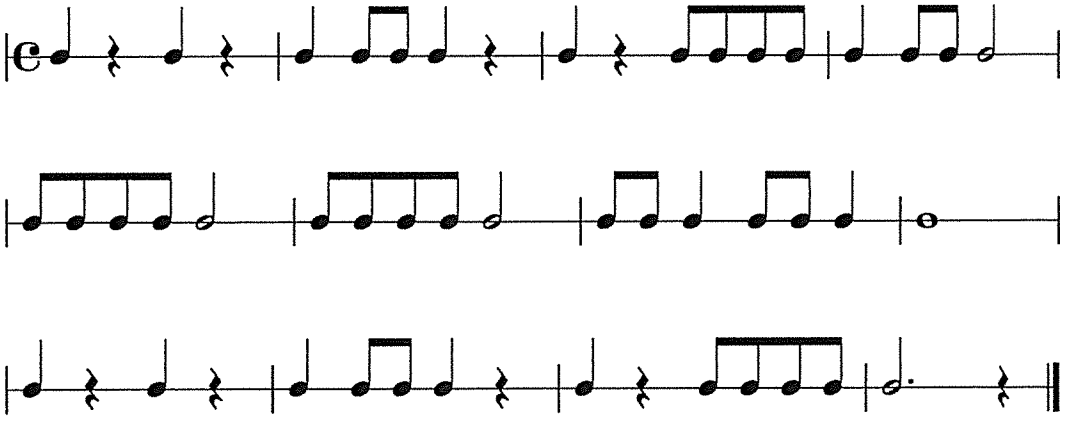




EXERCISE 50



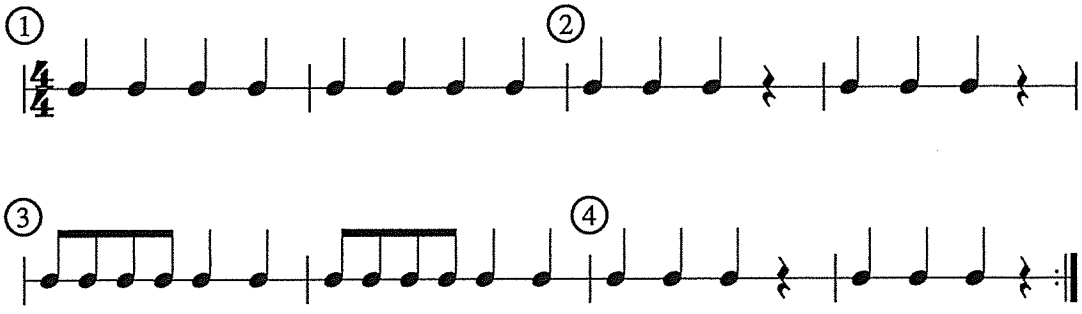
EXERCISE 51



SNOOZE ALARM MYSTERY ROUND

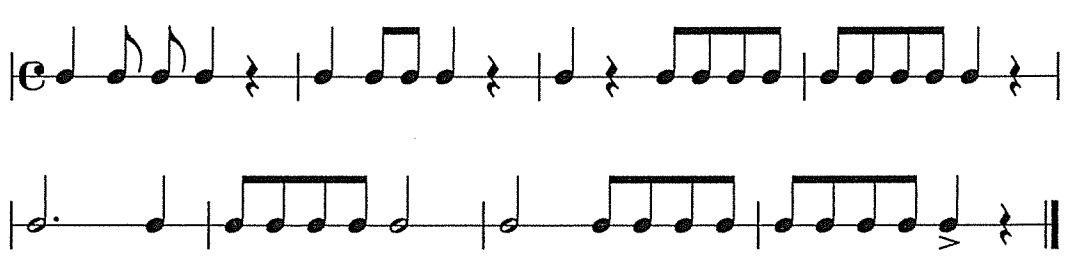
EXERCISE 52

TRACK 26

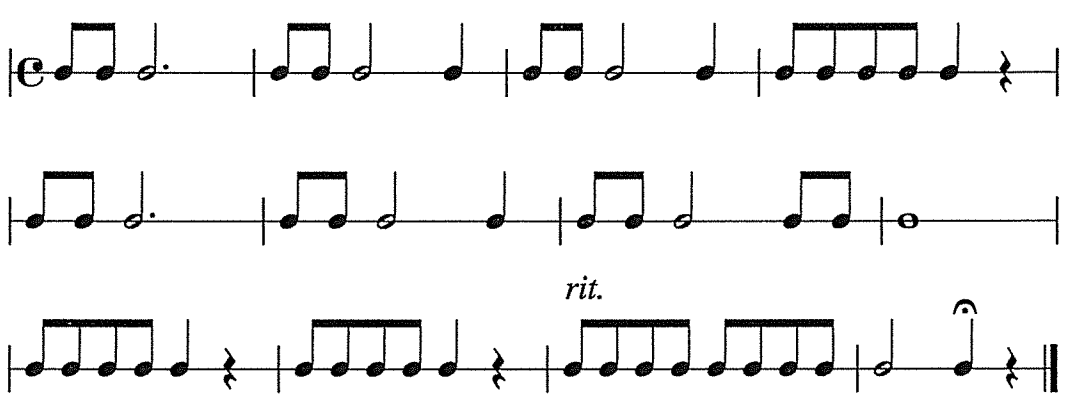


REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

EXERCISE 53
TRACK 27

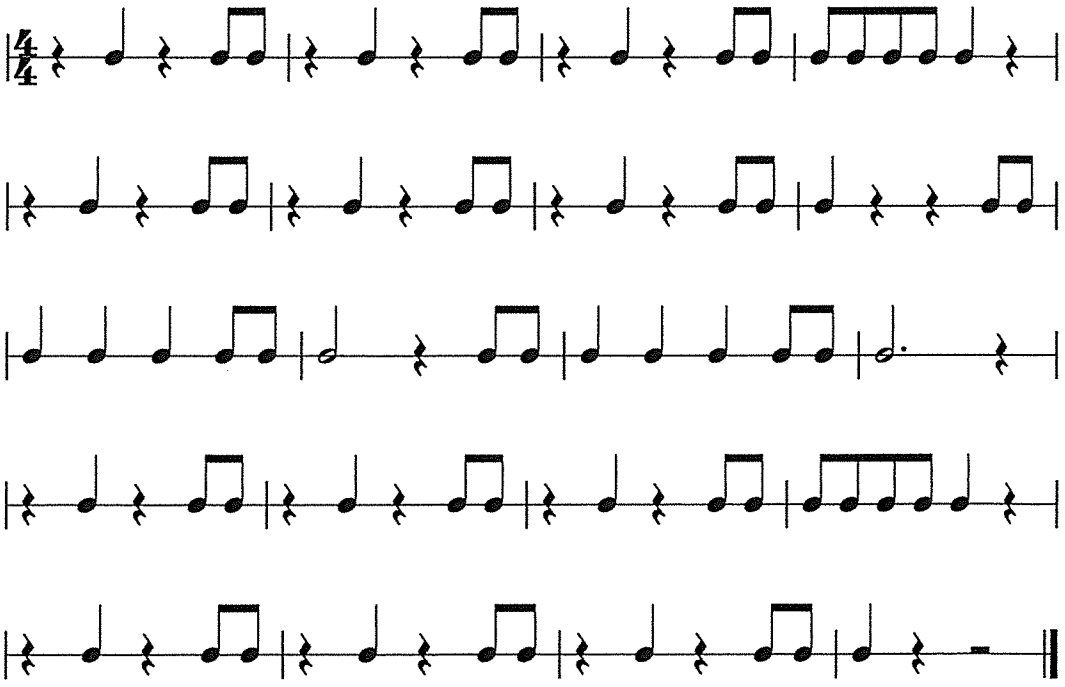


EXERCISE 54
TRACK 28



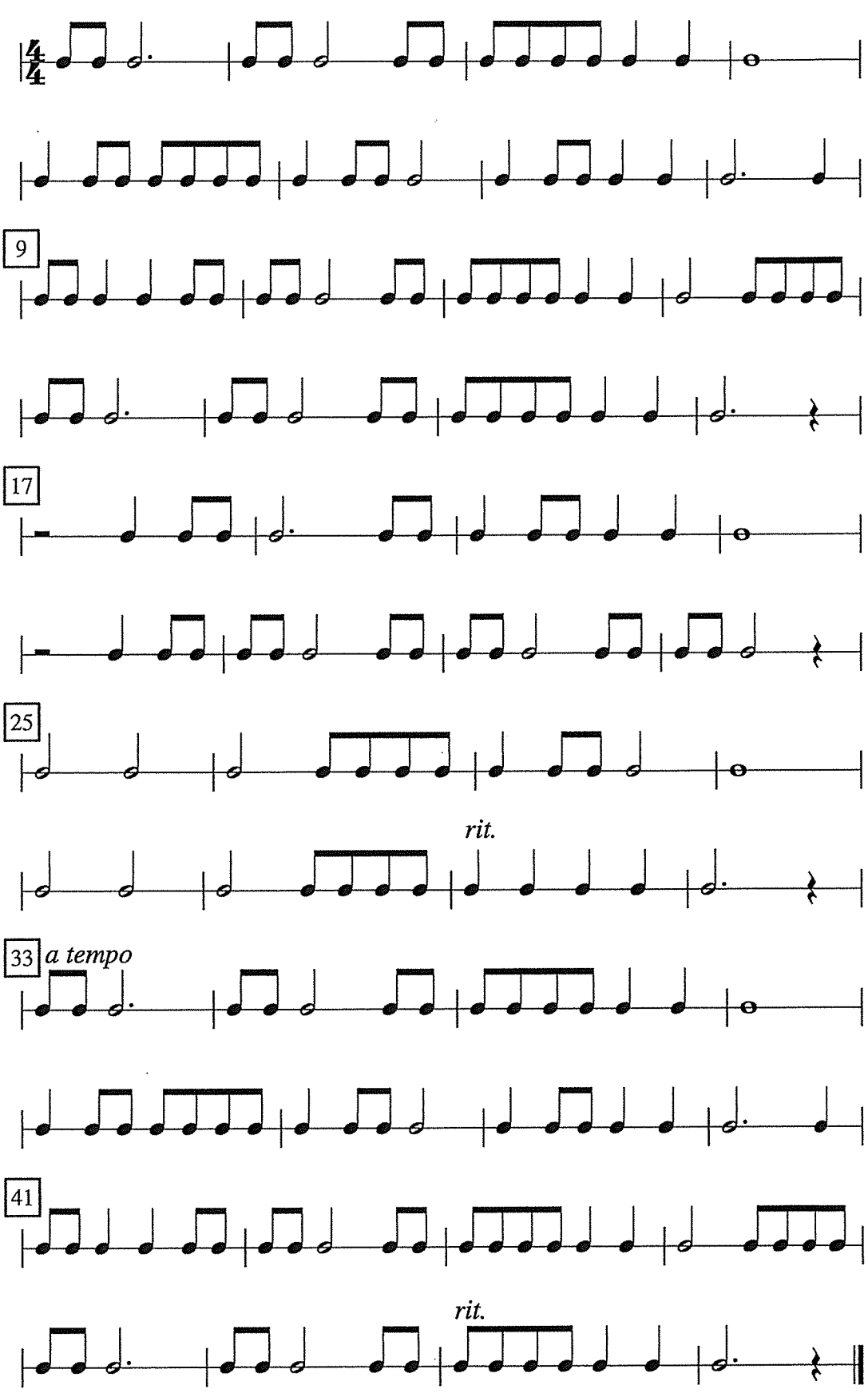
ROCKIN' RHYTHM

EXERCISE 55
TRACK 29



EXERCISE 56

TRACK 30

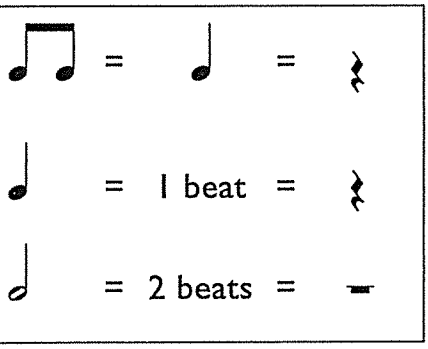


METER SIGNATURE
THE FEEL OF TWO

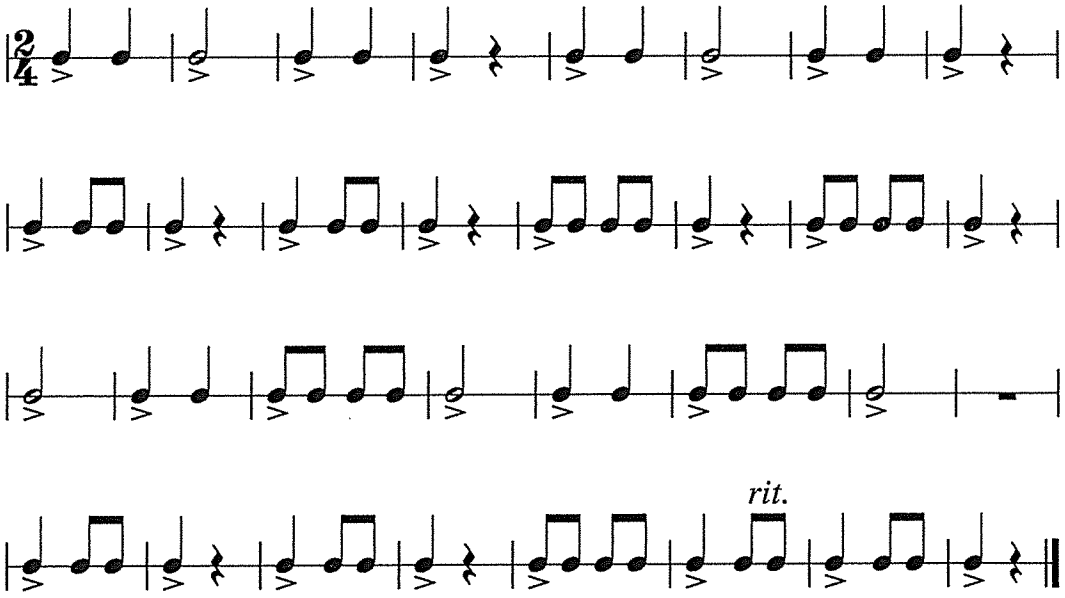
2/4

There are only *two* beats in each measure.

Each quarter note (♩) or quarter rest (𝄽) gets one beat.



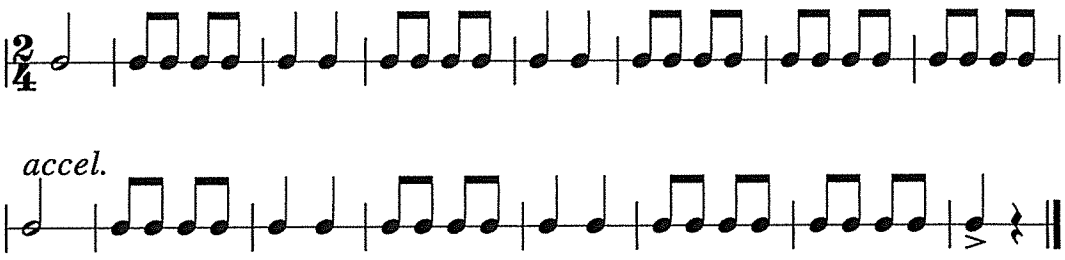
EXERCISE 57



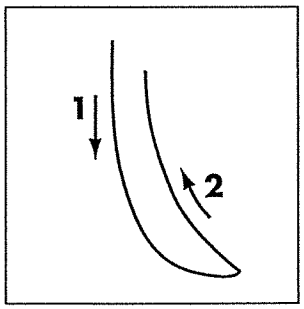
SHALL WE DANCE? MYSTERY RHYTHM

EXERCISE 58

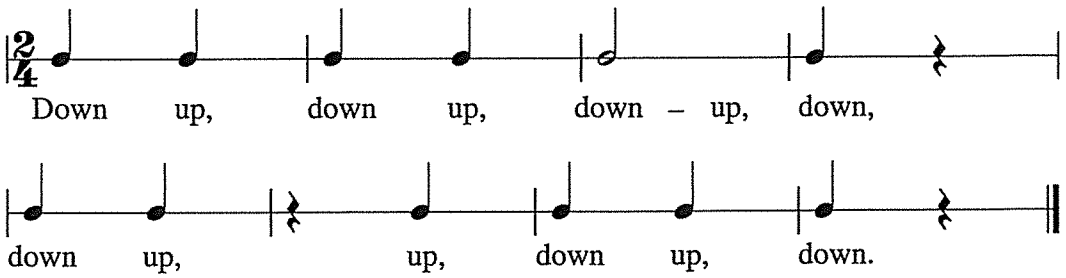
TRACK 31



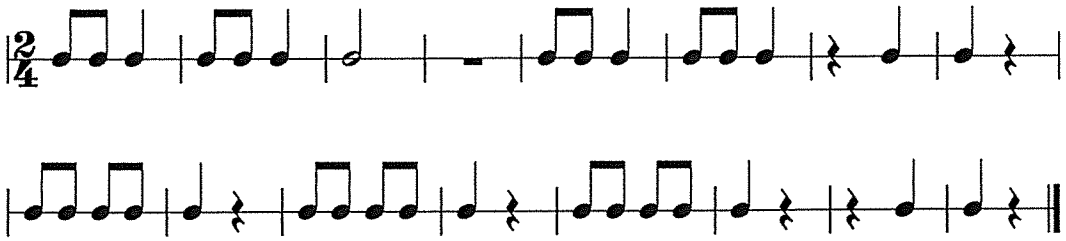
CONDUCTING $\frac{2}{4}$ TIME



EXERCISE 59

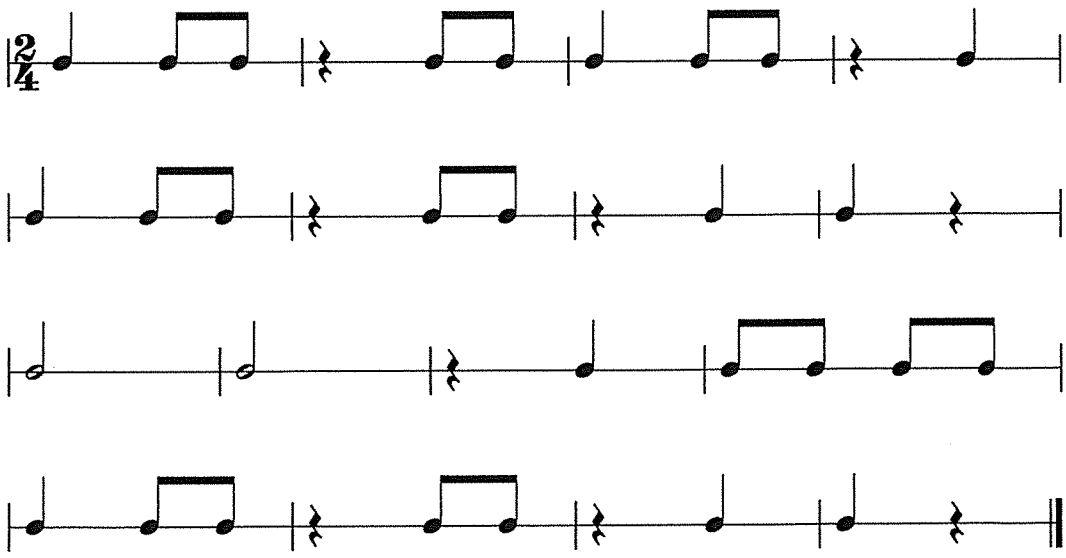


EXERCISE 60



EXERCISE 61

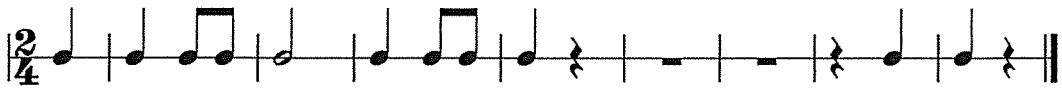
TRACK 32



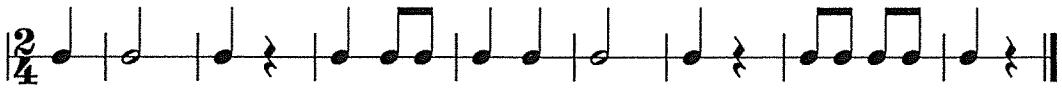
PICK UP NOTE

A **pick up note** (sometimes called **anacrusis**) is one or more notes which come *before* the first full measure of music.

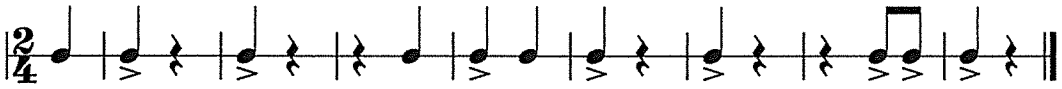
EXERCISE 62



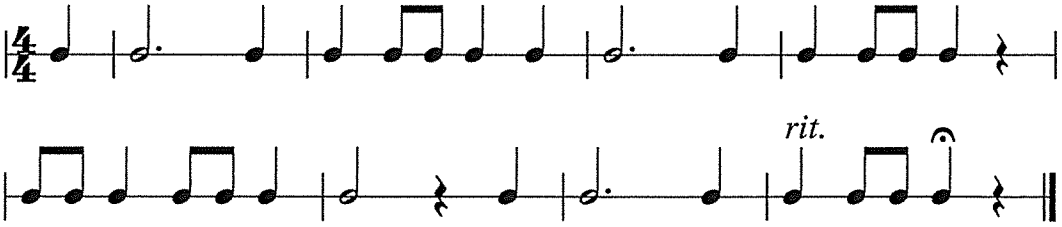
EXERCISE 63



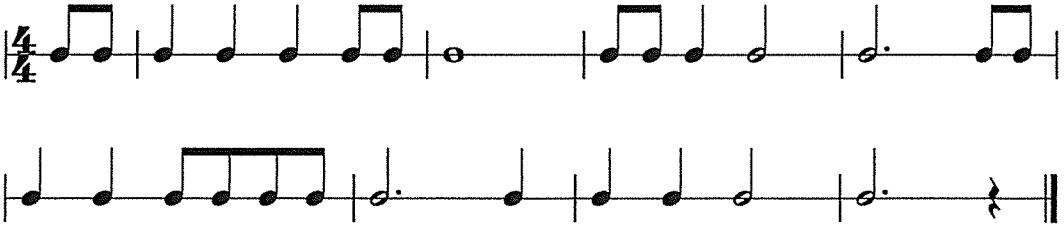
EXERCISE 64



EXERCISE 65

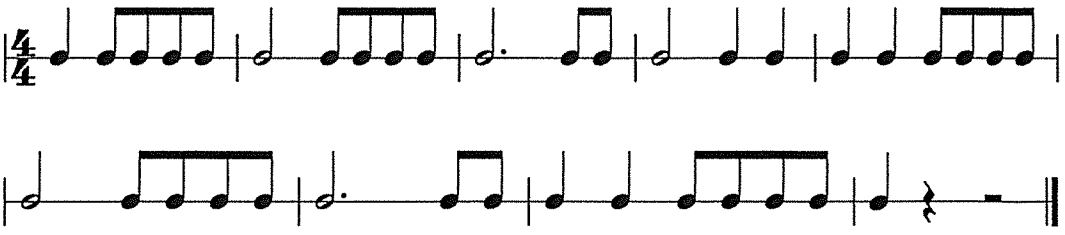


EXERCISE 66



EXERCISE 67

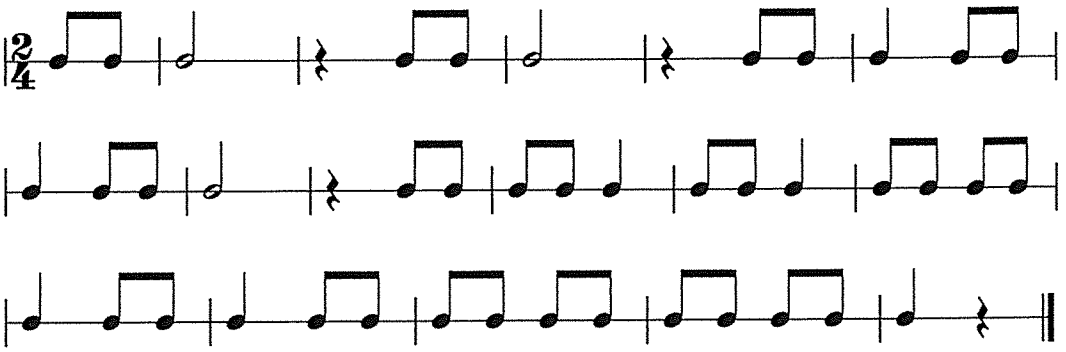
TRACK 33



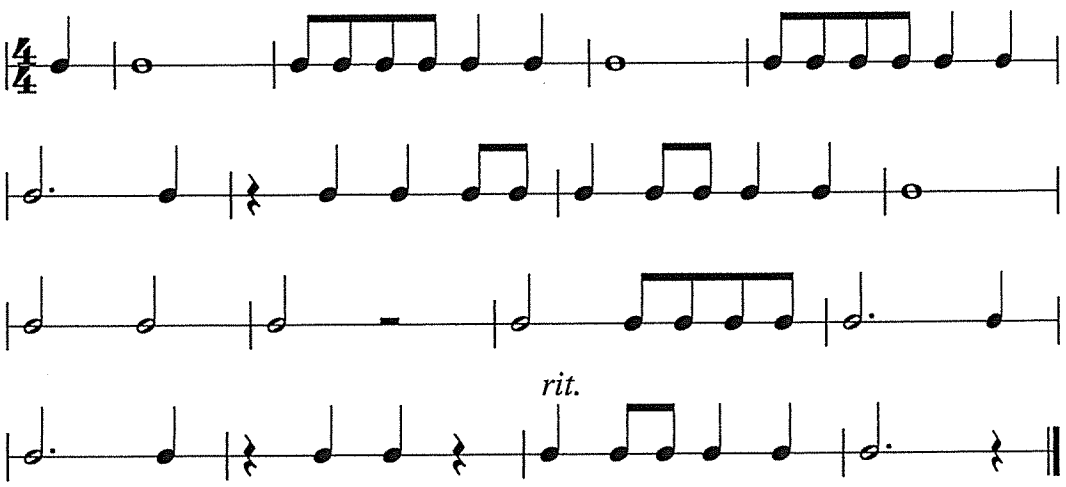
REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

BRASS BLITZ

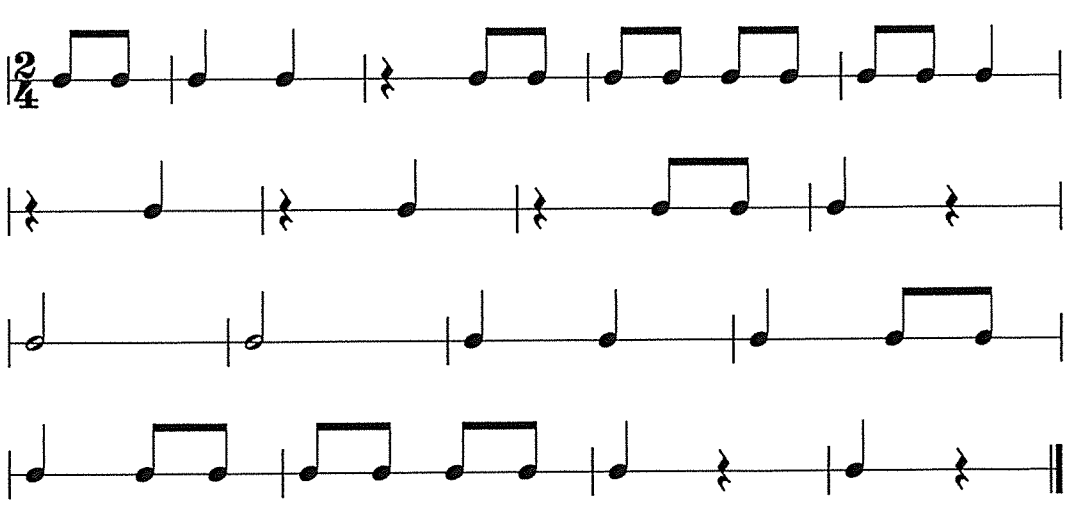
EXERCISE 68
TRACK 34



EXERCISE 69
TRACK 35



EXERCISE 70
TRACK 36

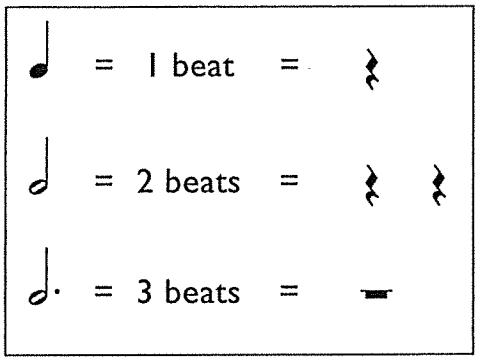


METER SIGNATURE
THE FEEL OF THREE

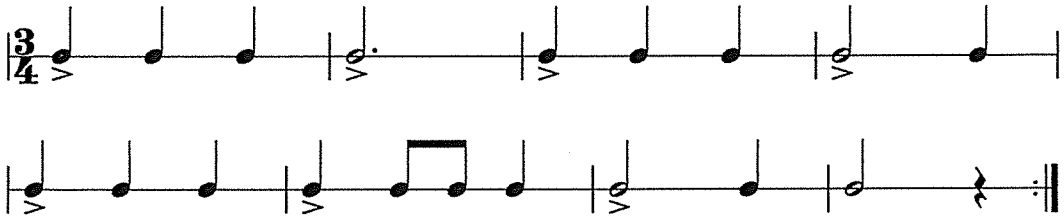
3/4

There are *three* beats in each measure.

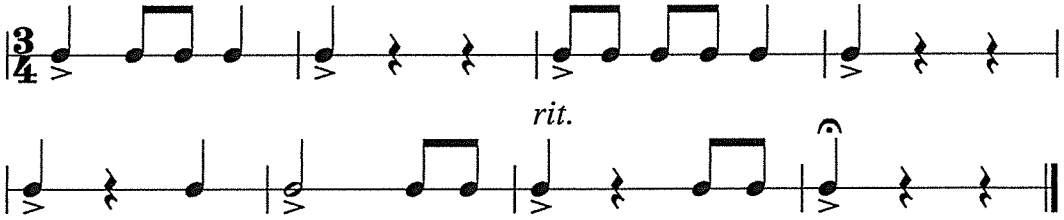
Each quarter note or quarter rest gets one beat.



EXERCISE 71

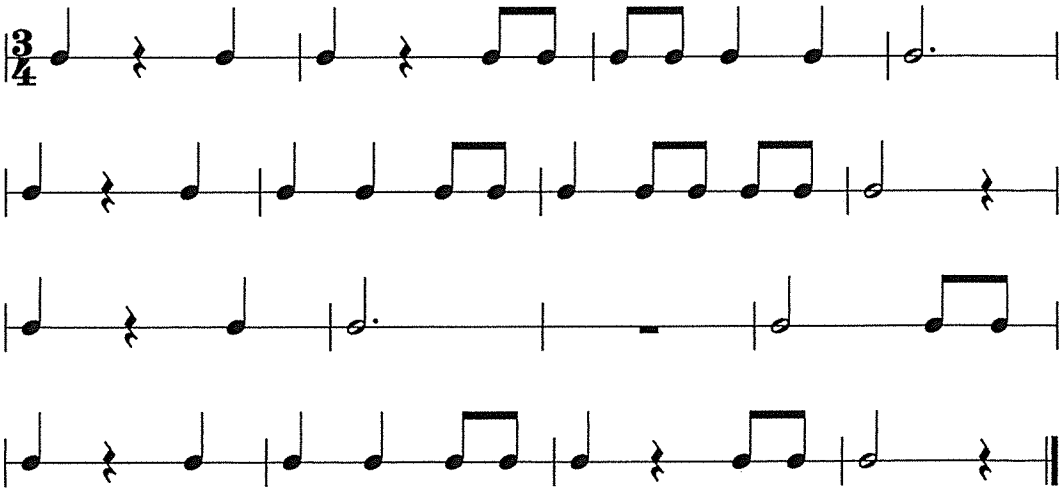


EXERCISE 72

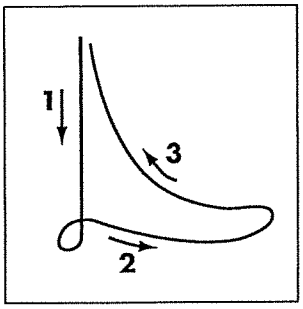


EXERCISE 73

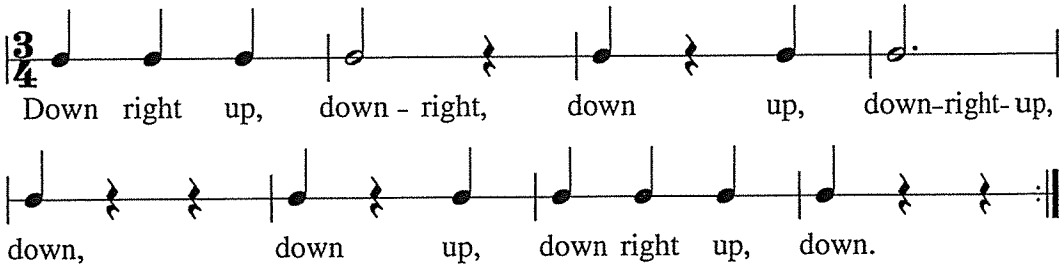
TRACK 37



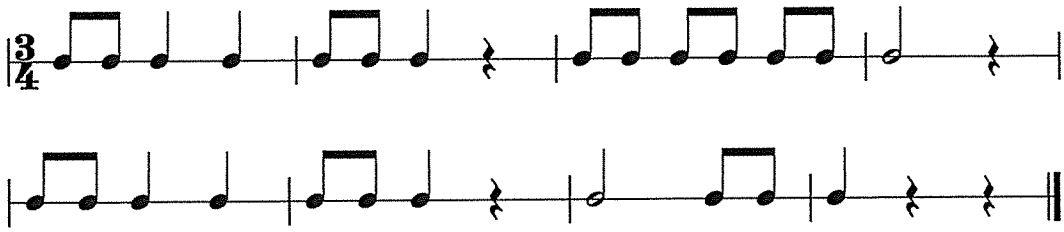
CONDUCTING $\frac{3}{4}$ TIME



EXERCISE 74

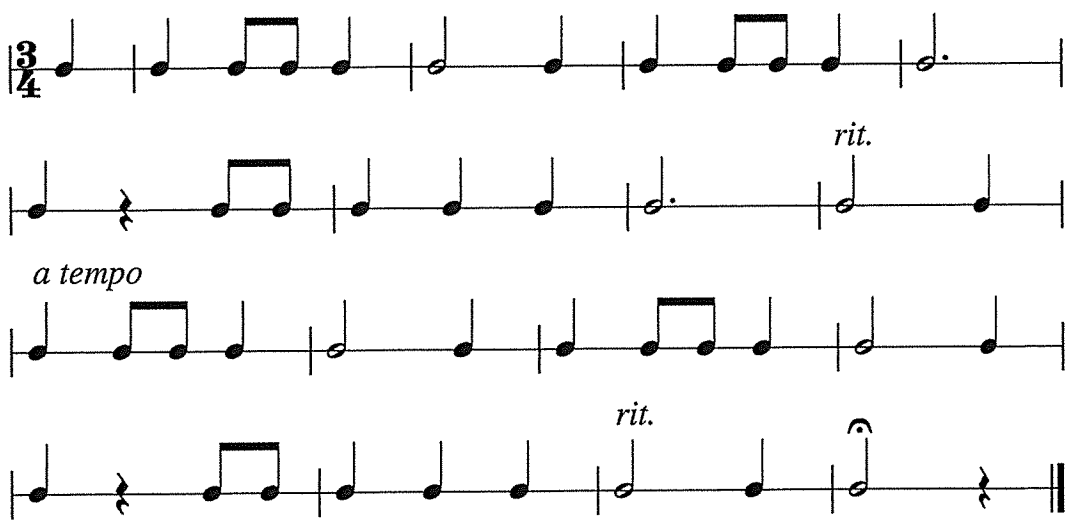


EXERCISE 75



EXERCISE 76

TRACK 38

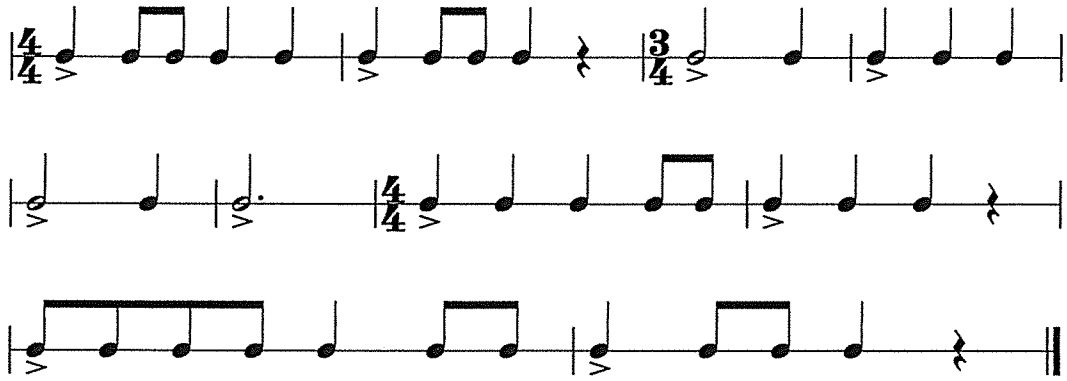


CHANGING METERS

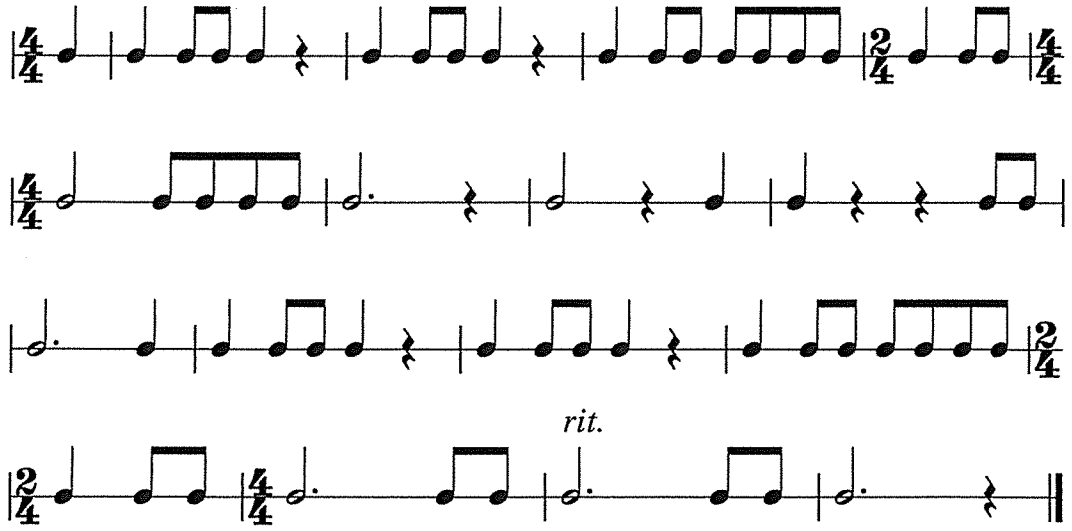
The composer will sometimes change the number of beats per measure *within* a piece of music.

Remember to keep the beat steady.

EXERCISE 77

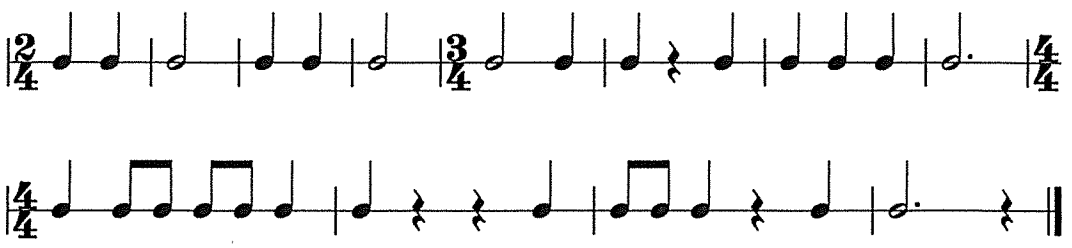


EXERCISE 78



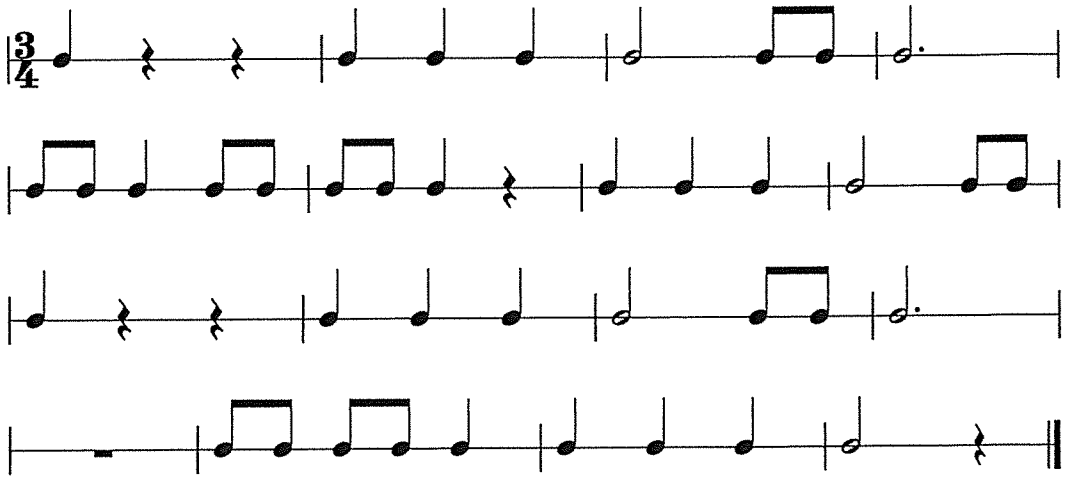
EXERCISE 79

TRACK 39

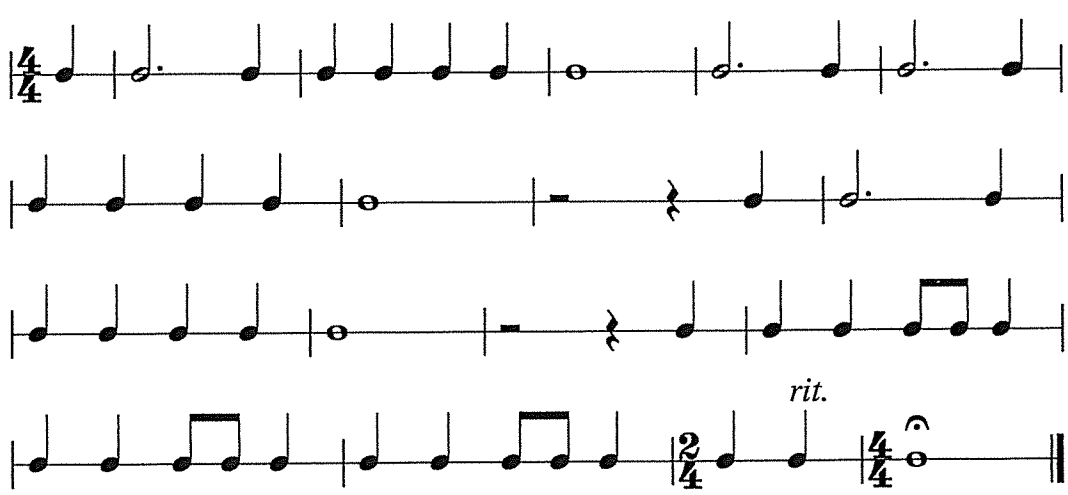


REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

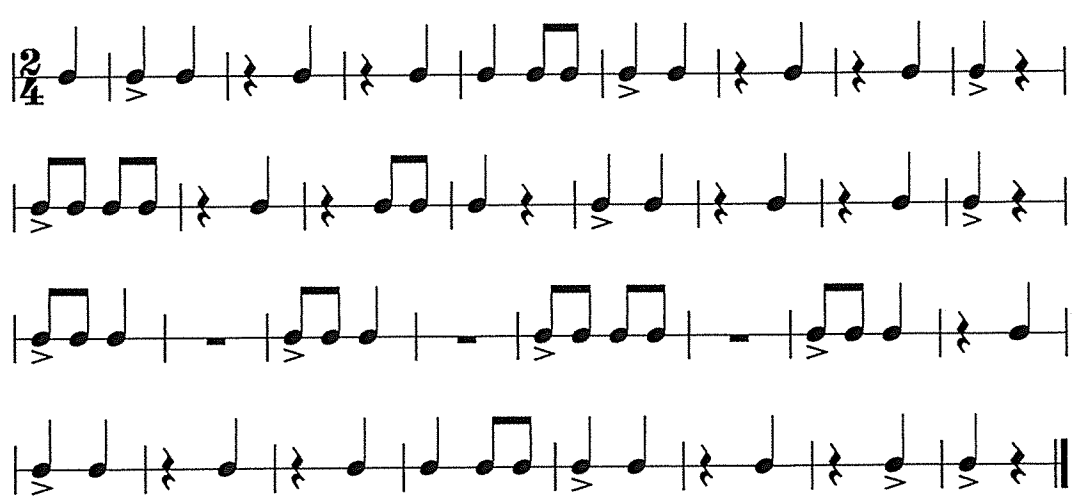
EXERCISE 80
TRACK 40



EXERCISE 81
TRACK 41



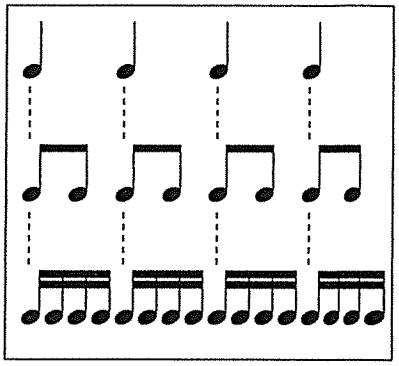
EXERCISE 82
TRACK 42



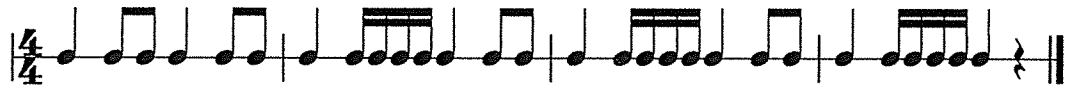
SIXTEENTH NOTES

Flagged: Beamed:

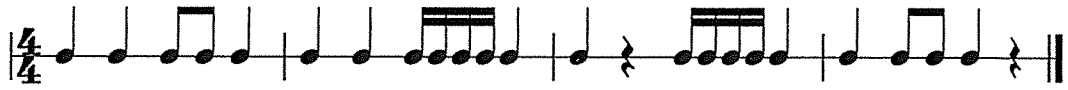
1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 + 1/4 = same = 1 beat



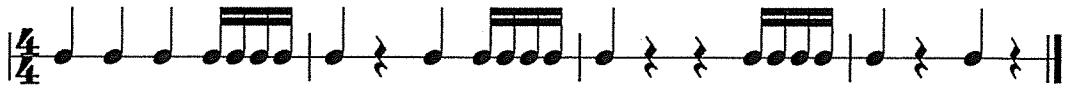
EXERCISE 83



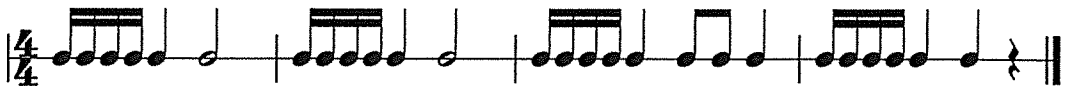
EXERCISE 84



EXERCISE 85

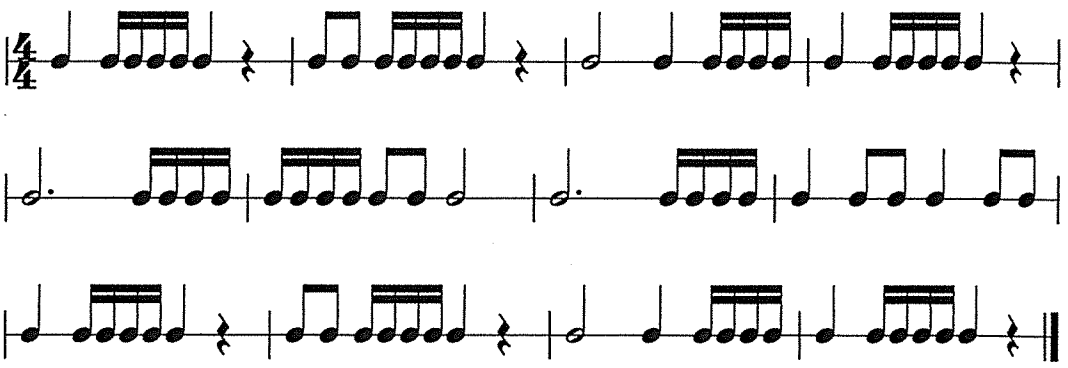


EXERCISE 86

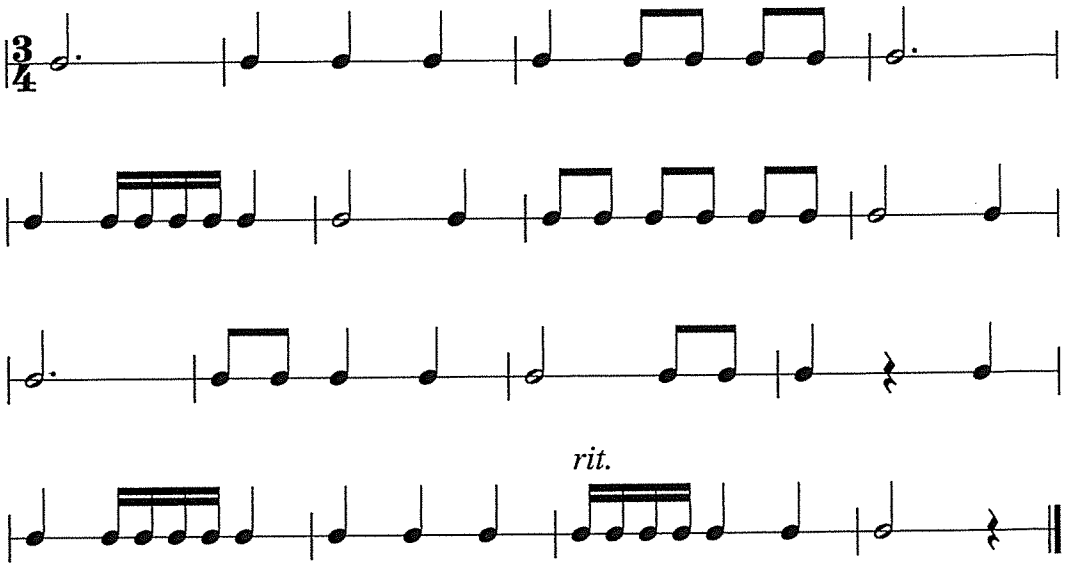


EXERCISE 87

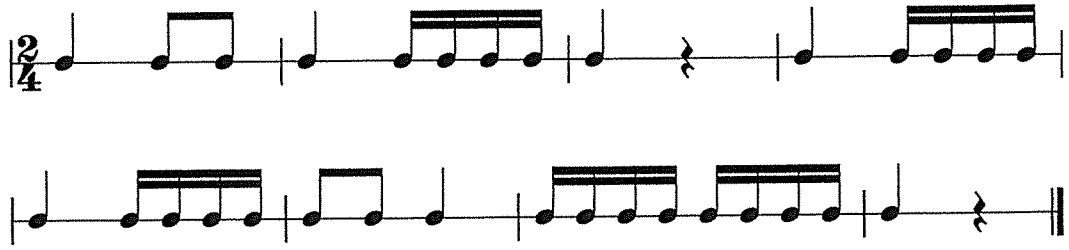
TRACK 43



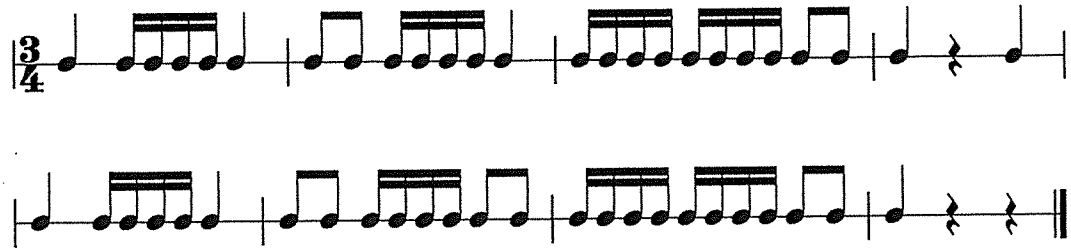
EXERCISE 88



EXERCISE 89

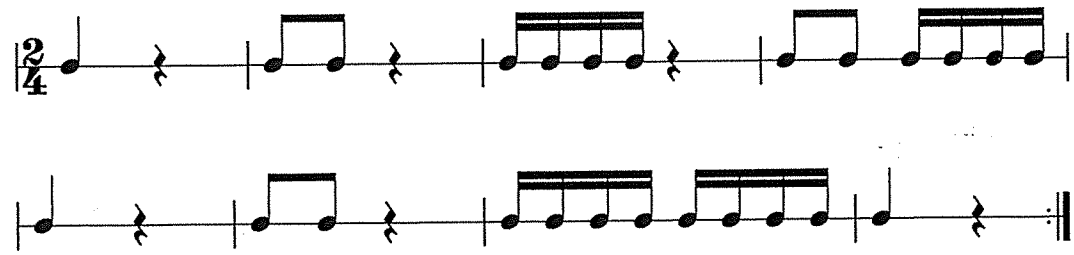


EXERCISE 90



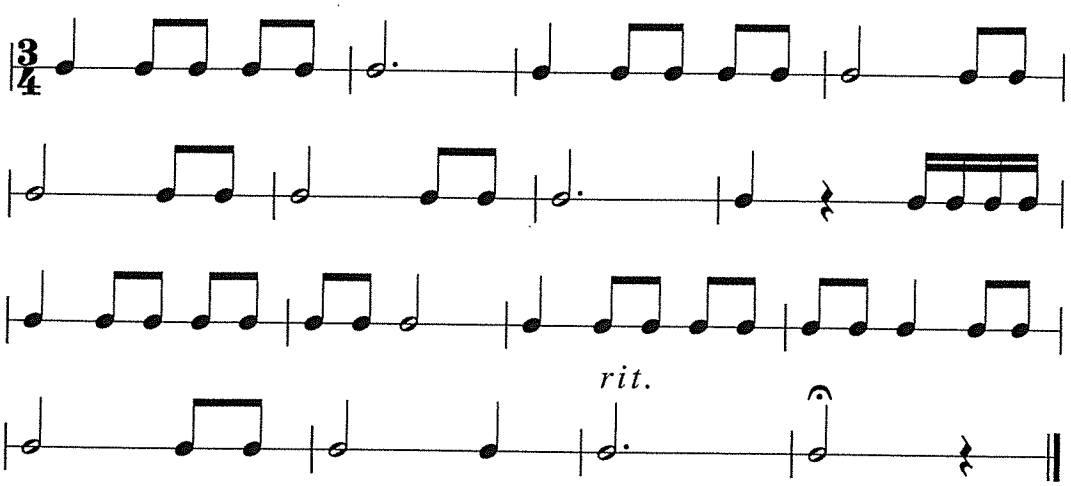
EXERCISE 91

TRACK 44



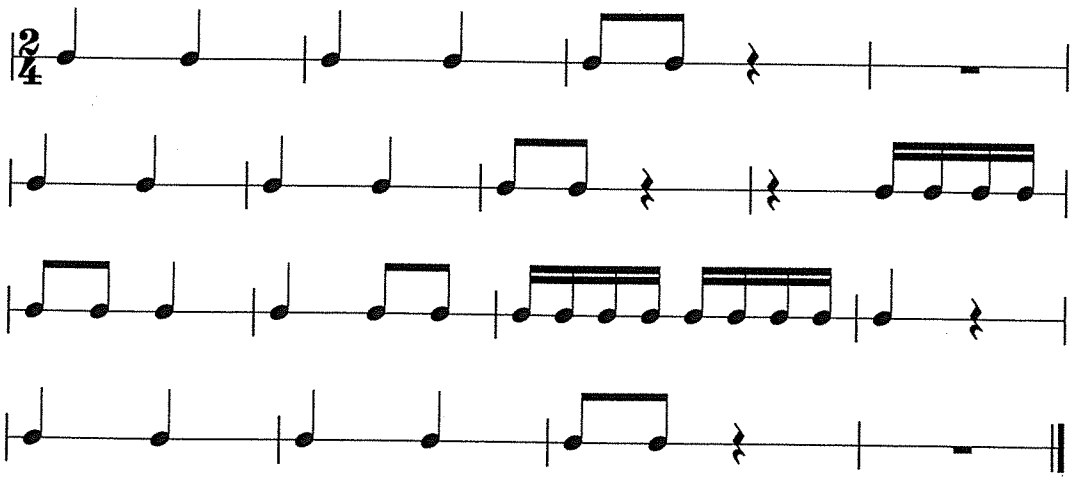
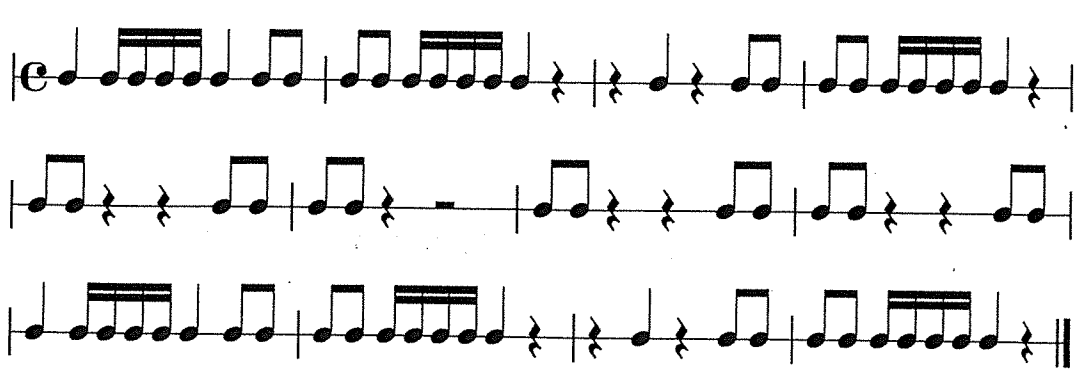
REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

EXERCISE 92
TRACK 45



ROCK-N-TWO

EXERCISE 93
TRACK 46



EXERCISE 94
TRACK 47